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HORACE GRANTHAM.

VOL. III.

HORACE GRANTHAM;

OR,

THE NEGLECTED SON.

BY

CHARLES HORROCKS, ESQ.,

LATE CAPTAIN H.M. 15TH REGIMENT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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HORACE GRANTHAM.

CHAPTER I.

ON the following morning, Mr. Cecil was walking alone in the garden, with his eyes fixed on the ground, these thoughts revolving in his brain, when he heard some one approaching. He looked up, and beheld Horace advancing towards him: his countenance was pale, his manner restless and disturbed, and the father immediately divined, that something unusual had occurred thus to agitate, and mark with anxious pain, the features of his young friend.

Mr. Cecil intuitively felt that the decisive moment was come, and that he should pro-

bably be saved the disagreeable task of the appeal which he had meditated, by Horace's voluntary allusion to the subject of his thought.

"Good morning, Horace," said he, as they shook hands warmly, "let us walk down to the river, this beautiful day, so that we can report to John, on our return, what the chances of sport may be."

"I fear," replied Horace in a faltering voice, "our sports, and my happiness, are about to be cut short together."

"How?" said Mr. Cecil. "I do not understand you."

"I am about to leave you," continued the former, the agitation of his manner increasing, and his deep suffering becoming more and more apparent; "and in doing so, I abandon a spot endeared to me for life by the recollection of the almost perfect happiness I have enjoyed, and which, in truth, I hoped not to quit, without so far altering my

position, as to give me a natural right for ever to share the society of those, whose conduct, and sincere friendship, have filled my heart with gratitude and affection."

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, Horace," answered Mr. Cecil, in a friendly voice; "indeed it was my intention to have shortly appealed to you myself regarding your attentions to my daughter, which I have allowed. My dear fellow, if those attentions had been disagreeable to me, of course, I should have put an end to them long ago, therefore do not add to your agitation by a notion that I disapprove of them in any way. In return, all I ask is that which I feel sure you will grant, a full and perfect confidence on your part regarding your family and pecuniary affairs, for I must of course, as a father, be entitled to inquire into and judge on these important things."

"Mr. Cecil," said Horace, in a voice indicative of fearful anguish, "your kind-

ness and generosity but add to my sufferings, and render me almost incapable of imparting the information I intended, for, had Miss Cecil, whom I loved with devotion, accepted my hand, I see clearly that you would have offered no impediment to our union."

"What do you say, Horace?" replied the father, much astonished, for he had no doubt of his daughter's attachment, and was quite overcome himself, at the sight of the agony apparent in the young man, as he spoke the last sentence.

"Simply, my dear sir," continued Horace, "that Miss Cecil, though I believe, nay, am certain that she returns my affection, has refused my hand, and the refusal is coupled with such extraordinary circumstances, that I do not know whether I suffer most from that cause, or from extreme bewilderment, in my vain endeavours to ascertain the motives which prompt her conduct." "

“You talk in riddles, my dear Horace; compose yourself awhile, and in the meantime, here is my hand, take it, and comfort yourself with the reflection, that Amy’s father would far rather have to congratulate you on your success, than condole with you, which he heartily does, on the present failure of your addresses to his daughter.”

Horace grasped his hand, and turned away his head; for the present scene, broken down as he was by his sufferings, cut into his very soul. The struggle was long and terrible; Mr. Cecil’s last words affected him so powerfully, that his manly nature was entirely overcome, and he started suddenly away to hide his emotions in solitude.

He bent his steps into the inmost recesses of the forest, where, with no human eye to notice him, he indulged his grief, and bitterly raved against that evil fortune, which everywhere assailed him; for the cup of happiness had surely been dashed

from his lips at the last moment, and his fondly-cherished hopes of bliss suddenly destroyed.

Let us not blame him, for who can say his fortitude is sufficient to enable him to reason calmly, under so great a disappointment?—and though his love was not unrequited, which reflection was the only bright spot in the mental prospect before him, that circumstance, at the moment, only rendered his position the more tantalizing and unendurable; for, with Mr. Cecil's approbation, which he had just received, how supremely happy he might have been, and how few the impediments to the accomplishment of his desires!

At last, he collected himself sufficiently to think more calmly, and, when the first impetuous rush of passion had somewhat subsided, he recollected with anguish, that he stood not alone in his misery, that his loved Amy herself was at that moment un-

dergoing greater torments than himself, and that though, owing to some mystery which apparently could not be explained, she was obliged to refuse him, he had won her affections to himself, and that she, in consequence, more than shared his present suffering and distress.

This turned the current of his thoughts from himself to her whom he adored—a salutary change; for his noble nature, whilst justly gratified with the great prize he had, alas! won, only, as it seemed, to lose for ever, felt deeply for her, and this reflection fortified him in his firm resolution to follow her noble example, and bear, with all the strength which he possessed, their melancholy, and apparently unavoidable, lot.

What the real cause of Miss Cecil's refusal of his hand was, he meditated long on, and formed his own opinions concerning; but after the scene of yesterday, he felt it would be both impossible and useless to press a

further explanation on her; and that his speedy departure was (however painful to them both) necessary, and could not be delayed.

Gloomily, and with heavy steps, Horace Grantham returned, after many hours, towards the village, and entered, as it was nearly dusk, that garden through the gate of which he had so often passed with Amy. He resolved to seek Mr. Cecil, and express his determination to depart; for he was in that frame of mind when delay would have been dangerous, and he felt it would also relieve him to unburthen his sorrows, and seek the advice of his friend.

When Horace had left Mr. Cecil in the morning so abruptly, the latter had been so much astonished at the unexpected news of Amy's rejection of his hand, which he had not deemed possible, that he allowed him to depart involuntarily, and instantly sought his daughter for an expla-

.

nation, as it was apparent that there was no time for procrastination. He found her alone, with the traces of tears on her countenance.

“My dear child,” said he, seating himself by her, “Grantham has been with me this morning.”

An expression of anguish crossed her features as their eyes met, and her cheeks were suffused with blushes.

“I know it, my dear father; I know all, alas, too well,” she replied; “and I am about to ask you a favour,” she answered, with a faltering voice.

“What is it, my dear?” said he; “it is granted before you ask.”

“Dearest father,” she continued, rising, and throwing her arms around Mr. Cecil’s neck, “hear me first, for I am very miserable, and depend entirely on your love for your poor Amy.”

“Which is your’s as ever, my darling;

you terrify me with your grief, and I am altogether bewildered by your conduct with regard to Horace. There is some mystery," added Mr. Cecil.

"There is, dear father, and it is of that I would speak, though I cannot explain it; I wish you to trust to me, not to question me as to the motives which have guided me in the refusal of Mr. Grantham's hand, which, believe me, are right and honourable."

"But, my dear child, how strange your conduct seems to me, and how unaccountable to Horace."

"Yes, it may be so, but there is no help for it," she replied; "it is the will of God, and must be borne; I have been foolish and weak, though I hope not wicked, in thus allowing myself to be carried away by my feelings."

"Not so," interrupted Mr. Cecil, "the blame is mine, and I entirely exonerate you,

my child ; it is my fault entirely, and I will allow that, as I love and admire Horace Grantham, I looked forward to your union with delight, and am much disappointed at this unlooked-for casualty, which not only entails much misery on you both, but robs us of the society of a person to whom I have become much attached."

"Dearest father," said she, "do not upbraid me."

"I meant it not, my child," replied he, "and I, also trusting to the rectitude of your character, and the correctness of your views, place implicit confidence in your decisions, and promise you from this moment not to question you more, firmly hoping, that as far as it is in your power, you will inform me on this strange affair and seek my confidence."

"If God is willing," replied Amy, "it may yet be possible ; as it is, receive my warmest thanks for your forbearance, which

I fully appreciate, and trust that the time may come when you will understand and approve of the apparently foolish conduct of your child."

"You have said enough, my dear Amy," said he, rising. "I have one thing more to suggest. Would it not be well for you to take up your residence with Madame Le Clerc till after Grantham's departure, which will be, no doubt, shortly?"

"I have already arranged it," she replied, "and only waited your permission to go."

"Do so, my child," said he, "and when he is gone, return to your home, when all my exertions shall be used to soothe your mind; for I am too well versed in the emotions of the heart not to know that, though you refuse, you passionately love Horace Grantham."

Amy hid her head in her father's bosom, and sobbed convulsively, as the words "I

do," were murmured, though almost inaudibly, from her quivering lips.

The father and daughter then separated, both extremely agitated, though Amy was considerably relieved by his acquiescence in her wishes, which removed at least one cause of uneasiness from her mind.

Horace found Mr. Cecil in his study; the latter welcomed him warmly, and at once opened the conversation by informing him that he had seen his daughter.

"I am sorry to say, Horace," continued he, "that I am now inclined to the opinion which you expressed the other day to me, that Amy has some hidden motives for her conduct, with which we are unacquainted, and I can console you by promising that, although I have determined, according to her own wishes, not to speak to her again about it, I shall leave nothing undone to fathom the mystery, and, I hope, thus clear the way for your return to us all; for

I regret extremely, that, as you have proposed, it will be necessary for you to absent yourself without delay."

"There is yet hope for me, then?" said Horace, eagerly.

"I say nothing, my dear Horace, further than I am your friend; and with Amy herself we both know you need no advocate," answered Mr. Cecil.

"A thousand thanks, my dear sir," broke forth Horace.

"Name it not, Horace," resumed Mr. Cecil; "Amy, dearer to me than life, loves you, and as I consider you in every way worthy of her, directly we can gain her consent, she is yours. At present, it seems, she has, for reasons of her own, which, from her disposition and character, I feel must be just and honourable, refused your offer, and, as I clearly perceive that refusal costs her much misery, it is my duty, as a father, though without wounding her feel-

ings, if possible to ascertain the cause of her conduct, and remove the impediments to your union. I shall consult our excellent friend, Madame Le Clerc, who possibly knows more than we imagine; in the meantime, Amy, of her own accord, has gone to pay the old lady a visit."

"Stop," cried Horace, "I cannot, and will not, thus inconvenience you; I will be off this very night."

"I will not hear of such a thing, Grantham," said Mr. Cecil, "you do not leave us in this manner; I have yet much to say to you, and to-night we are neither of us composed sufficiently to enter into matters of detail and business. You shall remain a day or two, for Amy has expressed a wish to bid you farewell."

"Heaven preserve her!" said Horace, "I accept your proposal, and to-morrow will relate to you some particulars of my life, with which you are unacquainted."

"Let it be so, Horace," returned Mr. Cecil; "now, good-night, for I have much to think of. You will find John in the dining-room; tell him all, for a nobler fellow does not live, and I am sure he, as well as myself, will regret the circumstances, which for the present, at least, rob us of a friend whom we should both have felt proud to welcome to a nearer intimacy."

"Mr. Cecil," said our hero, much touched, "I can never forget your kindness; you have removed a heavy load from my heart, and may God bless you for it!"

Horace found his friend, John Cecil, with his head out of the dining-room window, smoking his evening cigar, in happy ignorance of the events which had occurred, and agitated the minds of all the other members of their circle. He looked upon Horace already as his brother-in-law, and his disappointment, when the latter, in brief,

but clear language, related his tale, broke forth in loud terms.

He blamed his sister, and said, that all women were coquettes, and did not know their minds two seconds together; that she deserved to be left in the lurch altogether, &c. &c.

Horace would not hear a word of this, and at last got his friend to listen to the case on its real merits, and to make him understand that it was necessary he should leave them forthwith.

“Then, my good fellow,” said the generous John Cecil, “hang me if you shall go alone. I’ll keep you company. Whither are you going?”

“That I have not yet thought of,” answered Horace; “your father has insisted on my remaining a day or two longer.”

“I should think so, Horace,” cried John, “and I dare say before then Amy will think better of it.”

“I am certain she will not,” said Horace, gravely. “Indeed, she has already departed to Madame Le Clerc’s cottage, although I am to see her once again before I start.”

What a confounded bore all this is!” resumed John. “I declare I am in a great rage.”

“Which, my dear John, you had better allow to cool down as quickly as possible,” said Horace, with a melancholy smile; “the Fates, as usual, are unpropitious, though, as your sister loves me, I yet feel hope bright within me, and do not despair of better days arriving.”

“To change the subject, Horace,” resumed John, after a short pause, “did my father tell you that I have obtained my commission? We received the news this morning.”

“No, he did not,” replied Horace. “I heartily congratulate you. Where is the regiment stationed?”

"In Canada," answered John.

"Lucky again," said Horace. "I can give you much information on the country, having served there three years myself."

"I only wish you were still there, Horace, as I should like to be in your company; but no, for then I should not have had the advantage of your present acquaintance."

The cheerful society of the gay-spirited young man, coupled with the very favourable interview with Mr. Cecil, worked a happy change in the feelings of Horace, and, having taken some refreshment, they started together for a moonlight ramble, with those happy sensations which arise from a true and lasting friendship, imparting a calm pleasure to their confidential conversation.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, Horace sought Mr. Cecil early. "I hear John has got his commission," began the former, "I am very happy that he has been so fortunate."

"Well, Horace," replied the latter, "I suppose I ought to be glad also, but at my time of life, people do not part with their children without a pang, and I confess that the thoughts of losing my noble boy, and yourself at the same moment, are anything but pleasing. Let us hope that it is all for the best; now, sit down, and tell me just how

much, and what you please, of your prospects and position, your past life, and ideas of the future."

Thus appealed to, Horace related to Mr. Cecil all the incidents of his career, his situation with his father, and the disappointment of his hopes, on the occasion of his attendance at his grandfather's funeral.

Mr. Cecil listened attentively, and, when Horace ceased speaking, thus addressed him:—

"I never heard so strange a story; it wears altogether so much the appearance of improbability, that I cannot believe but that there is something wrong, and that your grandfather must have both made a will, and left you his heir. Independently of that consideration, I cannot think it likely that a man in his senses—which I conclude your grandfather was—could, of his own free will, sign away, without any apparent cause, the whole of his vast pro-

perty, to a man in no way related to him, although that man was his partner in business, and as such, no doubt, entitled to a fair share of the profits arising from it. Were you always on good terms with Mr. Macgregor?"

"Certainly," replied Horace, "though he was a strange man, of very eccentric habits. When he did see me, which was not often, he treated me with kindness, and neither my father nor myself doubted for an instant that I should succeed to his fortune; indeed, the old gentleman himself repeatedly alluded to it, and always in terms which led us to believe there could be no mistake whatever as to the result."

"Do you mean to say that the partner, whoever he was, obtained the whole business, and ready cash, excepting the £5000 you received?" asked Mr. Cecil.

"I do," replied Horace, "and moreover, I hear from Scotland, that he is making an

immense fortune, something like £15,000 or £20,000 a year, and lives like a second Hudson, in citizen pomp and magnificence."

"Strange," resumed the elder gentleman.
"Did you see the document?"

"No," replied Horace, "but I heard it solemnly read, in the midst of a large conclave of black-coated lawyers, and their satellites, who all seemed perfectly satisfied, whilst I was stunned and speechless."

"And was there a strict search made for a will?"

"I attended it myself," continued Horace, "and broke the seals, personally, of all the desks, where such records might be supposed to lie. However nothing was forthcoming, and were it not for the fact that an old clerk of my grandfather's, who seemed the only person who at all felt for my position, had met me on my way out of the counting-house, and condoled-with me most kindly, saying, I recollect, that he con-

sidered Mr. Macgregor must have made a will, I should never have thought of the circumstance again. Since that period, his words have occasionally occurred to me, though the whole affair has passed off, as it were, like a dream, though of a very unpleasing nature."

"Did not your father take steps to investigate the legality of all these proceedings," continued Mr. Cecil, "which I confess appear to me to have been conducted most strangely."

"I believe he sent a person to Scotland, who returned perfectly satisfied," said Horace, "but really I did not take much notice of what occurred. I rather set myself to bear the disappointment, and hoped that my misfortune would have elicited compassion and kindness from my father. But you know the result."

"It is the way of the world, Horace," replied Mr. Cecil; "good fortune begets

friends, whilst the contrary too often leaves a man alone with his poverty, to rely on his own resources. But from what I have heard, I am decidedly of opinion that you should go instantly to London, and take the very best legal opinions on your case. All is mysterious and dark, but the facts themselves are so improbable, that I cannot divest myself of the idea that fraud and villany have been at work, and that you may yet succeed to what I consider your decided right—the fortune of your grandfather.”

“I confess I do not think so, but am quite willing to be guided by your opinion,” replied Horace.

“I can give you letters to some eminent lawyers,” resumed Mr. Cecil, “who will give you their private advice and assistance, and in the frame of mind in which you are at the present time, I think it most fortunate

that something occurs to occupy your time and attention."

Horace shook his head.

"Depend on it, you will find what I say correct," continued Mr. Cecil; "there is nothing like action for a mind diseased, and as John must go to England to get his appointment, and attend the *levée*, etc., you will have a jolly travelling-companion enough, to keep up your spirits. I, myself, allow that I am sanguine as to the result. So now go and make your arrangements with Ensign Cecil for your speedy departure. Is it arranged?"

"My dear Mr. Cecil," replied Horace, "your wishes are law to me, and, as John goes to England, I cannot do better than accompany him. Does he return home, before he embarks for Canada?"

"He does," answered Mr. Cecil, quickly. "I know what you would say; you wish to be his companion, Horace. I promise no-

thing, we must be guided by circumstances, but my wishes coincide with yours. I can say no more."

At this moment, the man-servant entered the room, and presented a letter to Horace which bore the English post-mark.

He immediately recognised his father's writing.

"Read your letter, Horace," said Mr. Cecil; "in fact I am engaged till the afternoon, when we will take a walk together."

"With pleasure," said our hero, who thought possibly they might bend their steps in the direction of Madame Le Clerc's cottage. "I shall be ready."

He rose, and left the apartment, commencing the perusal of his father's letter, which was as follows:—

"Hertford-street, May-Fair, Oct. 10.

"MY DEAR HORACE,—I enclose a most extraordinary and inexplicable document

without a name, which I received this morning, the writer requesting me to forward it to you without delay. It is beyond my comprehension, and I give no opinion or advice whatever on the subject, which leaves you at full liberty to act as you please, without further reference to

“Your affectionate father,

“THOMAS GRANTHAM.”

“Very paternal,” thought Horace, as he proceeded to examine and read the enclosure; which was written on thick paper, in a stiff, business-like hand. It contained these words:—

“SIR,—If on receipt of this, you proceed to Glasgow, and arrive there on the 1st of November, you will hear something greatly to your advantage, by calling at ten o’clock on the morning of that day, at the Star Hotel. I know you are on the continent, therefore allow time for your arrival, and

earnestly suggest your attention to this communication."

The note was anonymous, and without date or address. Horace was greatly astonished, and returning to Mr. Cecil's study, he rapped at the door, and was instantly admitted.

"This letter," said he, "contains most extraordinary intelligence, in connection with our conversation not long ago."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Cecil.

"Read, and judge for yourself, pray," answered Horace, handing him the documents.

Mr. Cecil's face brightened, as he perused the mysterious billet, and he smiled with a satisfied air, as he thus spoke:

"Depend on it, my dear Horace, it is as I say; the writer of that communication knows something about your grandfather's will; or that law paper which put his partner in possession of the money. There can

now be no doubt as to your proceedings, and you must start, so as to arrive in time. What day of the month is it?"

"The 15th," answered Horace.

"That is all right," continued Mr. Cecil; "you can be off to-morrow, which will give you ample time, and I am indeed overjoyed at the result of my speculations, for I hope great things from your interview with your anonymous friend. You have now much to do, at four o'clock I shall be ready. Adieu!"

Horace's mind had, for the last twenty-four hours, been much relieved by his conversations with his friend, his explanations, and their kindness, and his attention also forcibly withdrawn from himself, but when the time approached, which it rapidly did, for his departure, and last interview with Amy, his heart misgave him, and he again became a prey to the sorrows and pangs of disappointment. His attachment to Amy was founded, not only on a passionate love,

but a deep admiration for her character, and the turn affairs had taken was more vexatious, on account of the, to him, utterly inexplicable cause of her refusal, and the great uncertainty which hung over future events.

Still, he had two causes of congratulation which soothed and tranquillized his mind; firstly, that he was loved by the object of his affection; and secondly, that he felt he was doing his duty, and acting in concert with the wishes, not only of Amy herself, but also those of her family.

These considerations, though powerful, could not, however, assuage his grief; and he looked forward to the parting interview with mixed feelings of hope and anguish, not, indeed, a hope that Amy would at the eleventh hour relent, but that some more decided understanding for the future might arise, some happy explanation unravel the mystery which surrounded them.

The morning was spent in making the necessary arrangements with John Cecil for their journey; which was fixed for the day but one after the present. The young soldier was overjoyed at having Horace for a companion, and half forgot the misfortunes which had occurred, and his own separation from his family, in the anticipation of the future, and the sure return, as he reckoned, of Horace Grantham with him to the Tyrol. In the afternoon the latter found Mr. Cecil ready for the promised walk.

He immediately proposed that they should call at Madame Le Clerc's. Horace acquiesced with avidity, though his whole frame shook with nervous agitation.

Mr. Cecil had resolved that Horace should this day make his adieu to Amy, who, he heard from Madame Le Clerc, was buried in grief, and he wisely considered it better for both of them at once to get over an inter-

view, which, though painful, was necessary, and could not be avoided.

The father placed implicit confidence in both Horace and his daughter, their feelings were sacred to him, and he was convinced that Amy's conduct, though strange, was in reality correct, and that some powerful motive prompted it. On their way across the ravine, he purposely avoided any allusion to these events, but turned the conversation to their approaching separation, and his son's affairs.

"I am sorry to lose my son, Grantham," he said, "for every hour he becomes more necessary to me, and I see fresh cause to love and admire him. When I compare my feelings with those of many fathers, I am truly at a loss to understand that indifference, if not something worse, which I have so often observed in parents. John is so identified with my own being, that our severance actually robs me, as it were,

of half myself, whilst, thank God, I feel that his regrets, though no doubt, owing to his age, happily for him, they will not be so lasting, are equally deep."

"You say truly, Mr. Cecil," replied Horace; "your son has often in warm terms expressed his love and attachment to you, to myself."

"Noble fellow," said his father, a tear glistening for a moment in his clear eye, "he knows on one hand, that my folly has rendered his seeking a profession necessary; and on the other, that half, nay all I have left in the world, is his own, and that I would share my last shilling with him."

"Though your separation is painful," resumed Horace, "in one sense surely it is advantageous, for I am daily more and more convinced, that no young man should be idle, however rich, and that he should devote his time and talents to some profession, both as a duty attached to our existence on

earth, and the sure means of avoiding *ennui* and discontent—the certain results, eventually, of a life devoted to mere amusement, without a fixed occupation to fill up our time, and give an aim to our pursuits.”

“There cannot be a doubt of it,” replied Mr. Cecil; “I have seen this lately so plainly exemplified at many of the baths and watering-places on the continent, where our countrymen crowd; some in pursuit of pleasure, but more still for the purposes of economy; a capital thing in itself, but accompanied, in the instances I allude to, necessarily, by a life of such empty inactivity, such a frivolous round of childish amusements, or worse, that the individuals themselves, having lost the opportunity of employing their time and talents in some useful manner, become at last mere machines, and incapable of any self-exertion, however fitted for it by education or nature, to extricate themselves

from the lot they have thus, some voluntarily, and others through misfortune, imposed on themselves."

"Yet, if a man, owing to pecuniary circumstances," resumed Horace, "is forced to live abroad, it seems hard to blame him for a position which he cannot avoid."

"It is so, and I have often pitied, whilst in conversation with a man of feeling and education, so situated," answered Mr. Cecil, "the fate which has exiled him from his country, and buried him in a foreign land; where talents lie hidden, which often, under happier auspices or opportunities, might have been of advantage to his country, and infinite service to himself. Besides, there can be no doubt of the truth of the proverb, 'out of sight, out of mind,' and I hold that a man who is an exile from his own country, supposing him possessed of any interest at home, and with any talent, necessarily loses, by such a position, his best

chance of advancement; for he is speedily forgotten in England, and, more unfairly still, often condemned by his relatives for wasting his time in *voluntary idleness*, when in reality the poor devil has no choice left him, and is obliged, from mere want, to continue a life which his soul abhors, and which he would willingly exchange, did the opportunity arise, for one of self-exertion, and wholesome employment."

"I quite agree with you," replied Horace, in an absent tone of voice, for at that moment he descried Amy Cecil approaching, though at some distance. She had not yet perceived them; her eyes were fixed on the ground, as she slowly advanced, her whole appearance denoting that her spirit was crushed, that deep grief had already committed fearful ravages in her mind; for her face was pale, and a settled expression of melancholy overspread her lovely features.

"There is my darling child," said Mr. Cecil, who now beheld her. "Horace, my dear fellow, I shall entrust her to your care for half an hour. You possess my confidence, and will not abuse it. Return home when you have taken your leave of her. I shall in no way interfere; for I have such an opinion of Amy, that I can trust her to act as seems best to her own judgment; however much I may pity you both, and deplore her self-imposed decisions."

Horace did not speak, his heart was too full for words. Amy, on her part, knew that the fatal moment for separation was at hand, and nerved herself with a violent effort for the interview.

They met. Poor Amy could scarcely speak, and did not raise her eyes. She dared not look at Horace, who kept a profound silence.

Her father kissed her with affection, saying quickly, "My dear, I have some business

to transact with Madame Le Clerc; is she at home?"

"She is," replied Amy in a low tone.

"Good," continued her father, moving rapidly on, "John wishes to see you at home, darling. Grantham will escort you, for I believe they start for England to-morrow or the next day," and, by the time he had uttered the last words, he was nearly out of their sight, having rapidly turned a corner, round which Amy had just advanced towards them.

The lovers were alone. Both knew their fate, and both felt that there was no possibility of avoiding it. Their eyes met, some hurried words were spoken, they shook hands confusedly, and turned together on the narrow path.

Horace, though scarcely in his senses, for the sight of his beloved Amy, thus overcome with grief, had completely overthrown him, spoke first.

“Is it truly, Miss Cecil, come to this? tell me,” he added with vehemence, though his voice shook with emotion; “is it a fearful reality that we are to part, that, miserable wretch that I am, I am to be forced, apparently without just cause, from your loved presence, at the very moment when I might be the happiest of mortals? Speak! I implore you, Amy; relieve, if you can, my adored, my intolerable misery, and revoke that fatal sentence which has hurled me into the depths of despair.”

Amy Cecil would have been more than woman, if she could have heard this language from her lover unmoved. She burst into tears, and gave him her hand. He seized, and pressed it to his lips.

“Horace, my dear Horace,” she cried, with a faltering voice, “it cannot be; tempt me not, but rather assist me to bear with fortitude, by your example, the cross which is laid upon us, for Horace, I am but a poor

weak creature, and my misery is unspeakable."

"Forgive me," replied Horace, "I am unjust and cruel, but my love for you, my own, is so passionate, the prostration of my mind so dreadful, when I contemplate the future, without your beloved society, that I wickedly, in my agony, appeal to heaven to know the why and the wherefore, the causes of our misfortunes, and to curse the hour when your heavenly beauty first crossed my sight, rendering me, as it has done, incapable of thought almost, disconnected with your image, and robbing me of the possibility of happiness when severed from your side!"

"Hush, dear Horace," said Amy, "do not talk so wildly. You alarm me. You cannot wish further proofs of my affection, but I have a duty to perform, and with God's assistance," and she raised her eyes, suffused with tears, to Heaven, "*I will perform it.*"

“Is this a time,” said Horace, “dearest, to talk of duty, when the happiness of our whole lives is at stake, nay, my very existence?”—he paused.

At that moment, Horace thought of Mr. Cecil, and his conscience smote him for his selfishness. He passed his hand rapidly over his burning brow, and thus continued—

“I am indeed a madman, and talking wildly; you, my beloved, who are so far superior to me in virtue, must teach me how to act. Let me at least have the consolation, in my exile, of believing that I have obeyed your wishes, for I am in reality your slave, and fondly as I adore you, would rather forego the unspeakable bliss of our being this moment irrevocably joined together, than willingly give you a moment’s uneasiness, or add to the pain which you, like myself, are doomed to undergo. Though you have, alas, already informed me, that your decision is final,

let me not go forth into the wide world alone, crushed and miserable, without the blessed consolation of hope. Rob me not, Amy," he continued in a thrilling voice, "of the only feeling which can assuage my grief, and render life tolerable; do this," he added, carried away by his feelings, and the intensity of his love, "and who can answer for the consequences?"

Amy lost all command of herself. She pictured to herself her adored Horace far from her (as she felt he did not overrate his despair), about to commit some fearful action, and the struggle, which now commenced between love and duty, was violent and terrible, and threatened, for a moment, to shake her resolutions, and undermine her virtuous and noble intentions.

It was but for a moment; she thought of her dear father, of Madame Le Clerc, and shortly regained in some degree her self-possession and judgment.

“Horace, recollect,” replied she, “there is a God above us; He bids me to hope; therefore it would be wicked in me to deny this blessing unto you. More, I cannot say.”

“A thousand thanks for those words,” said Horace.

“Mistake me not,” interposed the lovely girl, “I promise nothing, dear Horace, but as I wish you to do it, so I trust to the Almighty for the future. He brought us together, and thinks fit to sever us, it may be only for a time.”

“Heaven grant it!” answered Horace. He offered her his arm, which she confidently accepted, and made no opposition when he took her hand, and held it fast within his own.

“Amy, dearest,” he said, mastering his agitation, “our time is short, make me one promise before we part.”

“What is it, Horace?” replied she.

He bent his head towards her, and whispered, as follows:

"You will not give your hand to another, without first seeing me again."

"I promise," she replied after a short pause, raising her eyes to those of Horace, with an expression of love and hope, "and may God bless you!"

They had now reached the garden-gate. They both felt that there was nothing left unsaid, and that the common adieux of civilized life would be most unsuitable, nay, could not possibly be uttered by either of them. The moment was fearful, the pain which tore their inmost hearts unspeakable, so much so, that it could not be prolonged. Amy stopped; Horace, with a gesture of impatience, and determined resolution, dropped her hand, stooped down, and impressed one kiss on her cold forehead, murmured the fatal words of parting, and tore himself quickly from her side.

In a moment she was alone, alone with her strong misery, left to battle with her

fate, and it seemed indeed to her, at that instant, that she had voluntarily banished from her presence her beloved, and that the sacrifice she had made was indeed greater than she could bear. Stunned and speechless, she grasped the wicket-gate for support, whilst the sounds of her lover's departing footsteps gradually ceased to beat in her attentive ear.

She prayed to God for assistance to bear this heavy blow, and did not pray in vain; but let us draw a curtain over her sorrows, whilst we admire the fortitude which enabled her, notwithstanding her ardent love, to act up to the principles of right which guided her, and which conduct, sooner or later, is rewarded by the consciences of those who, like her, prefer the paths of virtue and duty to those of hasty passion and self-indulgence. It was indeed a fearful parting; for it is almost impossible to convey in words an idea of the intensity

of the love which consumed them both, and rendered the separation in consequence a perfect death-stroke to each; for, in the immortal words of Shelley, Horace could alone have portrayed his feelings, as he thought thus of his beloved:

“Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! O, too late,
Beloved, O, too soon adored by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine,
Or should have moved beside it, on this earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now: I love thee, yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those tears thou hast delight.
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, tho’ dissimilar?—
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air.”

Mr. Cecil during his visit to Madame Le Clerc completely failed in his attempt to ascertain whether the old lady shared his

daughter's confidence. She played her part admirably, and he returned home more than ever distressed at the state of things, and apparent impossibility of altering the circumstances they were all placed in, in consequence. They saw nothing of Horace, John Cecil conducting all the arrangements for the journey. They were to start the following day early.

At length, he entered the house, having, in fact, occupied his time in revisiting, alone, those numerous spots in the lovely neighbourhood of the cottages, where he had so often sat or walked with Amy. He had eaten nothing, and, as he now threw himself into a chair, and replied in a hoarse voice to their inquiries, Mr. Cecil felt deeply for his young friend, and inwardly resolved that no endeavours should be wanting on his part to ensure his happiness.

During the evening, he confided to

Horace's care some manuscripts, which had, when at Hamburg, and since, occupied much of his time, for Mr. Cecil was not an advocate of idleness, and had been for some time past preparing a work for publication: Latterly, he had derived considerable profit from his pen, which alone enabled them to live as they did, and enjoy, in retirement, by the strictest economy, the necessaries of life. What little money he possessed, left from the wreck of his fortune, he now wanted for his son, and in consequence he redoubled his praiseworthy efforts, and had the gratification of finding that he did not labour in vain.

His name was well known in literary circles, and the work which he now forwarded to his publisher by Horace, was one by which he hoped to obtain a considerable sum of money, as he had given all his energies to the task, and it was the first

book, in a completed form, which he had laid before the public.

The necessary instructions which Mr. Cecil gave Horace on this subject occupied their time, and the attention of the latter, till a late hour.

They had taken leave of Madame Le Clerc in the morning, John Cecil had been with his sister all the afternoon, everything was packed, and nothing remained to be done, but to go to bed, and endeavour to rest as usual.

The whole party were unhinged and melancholy, for, independently of the mortified feelings of Horace and Amy rendering them miserable, all felt that a happy period had passed away, never to return, and that it was extremely doubtful whether they would ever re-unite again in similar circumstances.

CHAPTER III.

THE young men were called at six o'clock the following morning; it was barely light, and as Horace dressed himself, and assisted the man-servant to fasten up his portmanteau, his feelings were painfully aroused. He descended to the drawing-room, and found John Cecil already there, the natural buoyancy of even *his* disposition being much subdued by his gloomy thoughts on leaving his happy home. Horace hardly spoke, he rapidly swallowed his coffee, the few words that he did utter being scarcely audible from

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a choking sensation in his throat, caused by suppressed emotion. He struggled manfully, and as they both rose from the table, the warm-hearted John approached him, and taking his hand, hit him a friendly slap on his shoulder, and pointed to his hat and gloves, which lay near him.

Horace understood the motion, and they left the room together, our hero taking a rapid survey of the apartment, that apartment where every article around reminded him forcibly of her who had so identified her being with his own, that it seemed to him, as if, in the act of leaving it, he severed the last tie which bound them to each other, and that no future good fortune could ever compensate him for the present misery he endured. The drosky was waiting; their portmanteaux were already packed on it, when they heard the door of Mr. Cecil's bed-room open, and saw him descending the stairs in his dressing-gown towards them. Horace

turned away his head, for he felt that, unhinged as he was, he could not bear to witness the parting of Mr. Cecil and his son, or undergo a prolonged leave-taking himself.

He walked away, returned in a few minutes, and wrung Mr. Cecil's hand nervously, jumped into the vehicle, and was immediately followed by John, who, for the moment at least, was equally agitated and depressed. The word was given, and they started on their journey. At about five hundred yards distance, there was a sudden turn in the road which hid the cottage from their view.

John Cecil spoke first—

“Horace, my boy, light a cigar!” said he, “it *is* hard work, I confess, but, mark my words, we shall see better days yet—*nil desperandum!*”

Horace smiled sadly, and proceeded to follow the advice of his friend, for what

resource can equal a cigar in the moments of mental depression, when conversation itself flags, and the spirits are crushed by disappointment or misfortune?

They slept that night at Salzburg, and from thence took the most direct line to the coast, *viâ* Munich, Carlsruhe, Frankfort, Cologne, and Belgium.

It is impossible, in these days, to write anything new, or in any way to excite the interest of our readers, on such a route, particularly as the travellers journeyed with all speed, anxious only to get over the ground, and reach London without any delay.

During their progress, John Cecil's spirits resumed their usual state, and he exerted himself to his utmost to arouse Horace Grantham from the torpor and state of depression into which he had fallen; his efforts were at first unsuccessful, for three whole days Horace remained silent and

abstracted; but, on the fourth, honest John was rewarded by observing something like a natural smile cross his friend's features on witnessing a most ludicrous scene which occurred at Cologne, between some travellers and a valet-de-place belonging to the hotel where they had engaged rooms for the night.

John Cecil put this down as a good omen, and succeeded, the next day, in making Horace forget himself and his misfortunes for a short period, by openly quizzing an honest Berkshire squire, who occupied the same railroad-carriage as they did, and whose frantic endeavours to make himself understood in horrible French, were, though very praiseworthy, highly ludicrous; for even Horace's risible faculties were aroused, and he apparently enjoyed the joke, though he relapsed shortly after into his habitual state of decided melancholy.

They reached Ostend at half past six o'clock on the evening of their sixth day's

journey; the London boat only awaited their arrival for a start, so that they had not a moment to spare. In less than a quarter of an hour, Horace and John Cecil had transferred themselves, their baggage, and their fates, propitious or otherwise, to the deck of the steamer; the captain followed them on board, accompanied by a few passengers, and whilst they were lighting their cigars, the word for departure was given, the wheels revolved, and in an incredibly short space of time afterwards, they were ploughing the ocean on their voyage to Old England.

It was indeed a lovely night; the moon shone resplendently; innumerable stars dotted the dark vault of the heavens; it was a dead calm; each moment carried them further from the shore, from whence the busy sounds of man and his pursuits were yet audible.

In half an hour more, a complete silence

reigned around; they walked to the bow of the vessel, and stooping over, watched the sharp keel as it clove through the parted waters, causing them to recede on either side, in luminous ripples of silvery foam.

"It would be a sin to go below on such a night," exclaimed Horace, "it is magnificent!"

"But awfully cold," replied his friend. "Here is your pea-jacket. I have just sent down stairs for mine, and also the plaids."

The steward now appeared with the garments, *Benjamins*, or *toggery* (whichever the reader pleases), and, observing that the young men were smoking, thought it a favourable opportunity to ask them "whether they would like some hot brandy-and-water."

"I declare," replied John Cecil, "I do feel uncommonly chilly, Horace; what do you say to a glass of *callidum cum*, or *hot-with*,

the only correct antithesis to *frigidum sine*, or cold-without!"

"Well done!" replied Horace, bursting into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, "I never heard that before, though I thought I was acquainted with most such specimens of elocution, having served a short apprenticeship in Her Majesty's service."

"Two glasses of *callidum cum*, steward," roared John Cecil.

"What, sir?" replied the man.

"*Callidum cum!*" repeated Cecil, laughing merrily!

The man looked more and more confused, and also rather surly; for, like all men of his class, he did not relish being made a fool of.

"Do you mean *brannyunwater*?" he said, at last, as *Punch* makes one of his characters in that elegant drama, the "Unprotected Female," pronounce the words.

"Yes;" answered John Cecil, "*hot-with*,

and some biscuits, if you please, also. Now, Horace, as we are decidedly fated to get through another cigar, and drink a glass of grog each, I insist on your giving me a detailed account of 'the excursion' you made when in America with the savages after the moose-deer; for I am resolved to follow your example, and have a turn at the 'bush life,' when I arrive in Canada."

"Although it is called 'bush life,' my dear fellow," replied Horace, "I saw no bushes, or green thing during the fortnight I was out, for it was in the depth of winter, with four feet of snow on the ground. If you really wish it, I will give you a sketch of my proceedings with the greatest pleasure, for, as you say, it may be of infinite service to you."

"Pray do," answered John Cecil. "Here is the grog. Now, a light, pray; thank you; *now* I am all attention."

Horace, thus appealed to, related his ex-

pedition as follows, as they paced the deck—

“ *Moose Deer-hunting in Canada!*

“That short but delightful period of the year, which is termed by the Canadians the Indian summer, and which generally occurs about the end of October, and during which the uniform fine weather is proverbial, had nearly arrived; at its close, the approach of the rigorous winter of these climes was soon expected; and great were the preparations made by all the officers of the garrison of Quebec for the appearance of the first fall of snow. Many of us had never experienced a Canadian winter, and all looked forward, as young men of health and spirits alone can do, to the various amusements with which our friends on the other side of the Atlantic are wont to dispel dull care during six months of continual snow.

“We were not long kept in suspense, for

one morning in November, an urchin of an Irish boy (or tiger) who was in my service, entered my bed-room, exclaiming, ‘Ah! sir, now will it plase ye to rise? sure the ground is all covered with snow! and divil a bit of the *straits* is to be seen!’ ‘What the devil is all that jingling of bells outside?’ I inquired. ‘Plaze your honour,’ replied Charley Welch, ‘every harse has got a dizen or so tied to him! will I put the black ponies into the cariole, sir?’ ‘Wait a bit,’ exclaimed I, jumping out of bed, and hastily putting on my dressing-gown, I threw open the window, and gazed for a moment on the novel and beautiful sight which presented itself.

During the night there had been a heavy fall of snow, which had ceased with the rise of the sun, and been followed by a sharp frost, with a clear sky. Old Sol’s rays caused the white ground to glitter brightly, whilst the blue canopy of the heavens above

rested undisturbed by the presence of a single cloud! The "Habitans," as the peasants in Lower Canada are called from their French extraction, were galloping hither and thither, in their "traineaus," or rough-sledges, composed of a few boards, wedged together on iron runners; not much caring where they drove, shouting, and pulling at the hard mouths of their "racking" ponies.

The bell is considered quite a sufficient warning, there being no orders against fast driving in that country. The sound of these bells in the clear, sharp air, is most delightful and invigorating; in fact, few things can, in my opinion, equal a really fine Canadian winter day; when, well wrapped up, one can enjoy himself, riding, driving, or walking, just as well as in the middle of summer. I must not, however, become too descriptive.

" 'Charley Welch,' said I to my tiger, as, after breakfast, I buckled on my sword to

go to parade, 'I shall start in the sledge at one o'clock; put the black ponies in tandem, and we'll then see what these Canadians can do in the way of handling the ribbons.' 'Yes, yer honour,' replied Charley, delighted at the prospect of some fun; for I was then, my dear fellow, some five years younger than now, and up to *anything*.

"I found all my comrades on parade in a high state of excitement; after dismissal, there was a general rush to the stables, the saddlers, &c., some borrowing whips and harness, and others, who had only one horse each, agreeing most sensibly to purchase a sleigh between them; everybody seemed to think no time must be lost; so I returned homewards, and at one o'clock took the ribbons of my own turn-out, which was an extremely neat one; Charley Welch, wrapt in a buffalo-skin, was perched behind.

"It being my first appearance, I was very careful, driving slowly, and going gently

round the corners, which is often an affair of some difficulty in sledge-driving, as, if you do not look out, and are going anything of a pace, nothing is a more common occurrence, than to find yourself, by a sudden whirl, veering into a shop window, on the off-side of the street, and carrying your wheeler bang off his legs, or breaking your shafts, or upsetting the sledge, all of which are unpleasant contingencies, and better avoided.

“Sleigh-driving, is however, on the whole, attended with little or no danger, particularly on *terrâ fermâ* ; when traversing lakes and rivers, care must be taken to keep the beaten track, and avoid air-holes ; an upset also is there more dangerous, owing to the snow having frequently all drifted away, and left nothing but miles of glare-ice to guide the traveller’s way.

To resume. The valuable skins and trappings with which the richer classes adorn

their sledges are most beautiful and picturesque; the choicest furs often compose the dresses of the inmates; whilst the aprons and trappings of each sleigh are uniformly made of the skins of the same animal, according to the taste of the owner. Thus one turn-out presents a mass of black, another of the yellow bear-skin; then comes the light and graceful racoon-skin apron, with its many tails dangling around; followed by foxes, martins, wild cats, &c., &c.; and then, the most common, though perhaps the most useful of all, the heavy buffalo-skin. My turn-out was of black bear-skins, relieved with red edgings; the harness was silver, and the little horses I drove a perfect match and very handsome.

I flatter myself I was also a very average coachman in those days, and many were the feats that we performed in the driving way during the winter, which I now look back on with real delight. I think, however, I

broke thirteen or fourteen pair of shafts, and smashed a couple of sledges, before the spring, occasionally through a want of skill, but oftener, I am afraid, from a ridiculous wish to show off, and out-do all my companions in feats of daring and resolute coachmanship. Of course, you have heard an account of the club tandem-driving in Canada?"

"No, indeed I have not," replied John Cecil, "but I hope you will give me a correct version of it."

"But, I shall never get to the moose-hunting," continued Horace, "however, here goes—

"At a given day, called the 'Club day,' on which all the members, who consist of the military, and the principal inhabitants of the town, meet in their tandems, at one o'clock, on the Place d'Armes, in the middle of the city, a President is chosen, whose duty consists in leading the whole

club throughout the drive; that is, wherever he choses to go, the others must follow, *nolens volens*; he then takes a short turn in the country, and finally drives to the barracks, or private house, as the case may be, and treats the whole club to a grand luncheon, with hot negus, egg-flip, gin-purl, and other invigorating drinks.

“I will give you a short account of the day that I, myself, filled the office of President. My powers of coachmanship were well known; also my mad freaks, and love of fun. The day in consequence was expected to be a first-rater, and productive of great sport, if not of a severe accident or two, and I recollect well, as I drove up to the line, the faces of the numerous Jehus looked excited and uncomfortable. Fur gloves were now drawn on, cigars thrown away, reins straightened, and all made safe, each heart palpitating, as its owner awaited the stroke of the clock, which is the appointed signal

for the start. ‘*Off!*’ I roared out, as one o’clock chimed. One can compare the rush which followed to nothing, more nor less, than the start for the ‘Derby;’ every coachman endeavoured to obtain the second place, the ‘post of honour,’ failing in that, the next to it, and so on, the consequence of these frantic endeavours being, that in no time four leaders were seen standing on their hind legs, two sledges upset, and three more stuck together in a lump, whilst the grooms were doing their best to help their masters, and free the horses, in order that the chase after your very humble servant might be resumed.”

“Capital!” cried John Cecil, “What splendid fun!”

“I had made a bet of ten pounds,” continued Horace, who was now quite excited at the recollection of his deeds—“that I would distance the whole Club, by fair pace and coachmanship, in the short space of a

quarter of an hour—so I kept up rather an unusual speed, turning corners, and diving into bye-streets suddenly, with all the skill I possessed. I won my bet, and established my renown for ever. We then had our luncheon as usual, and the same scenes were repeated often; and always to the satisfaction, not only of ourselves, but of the inhabitants; who always collected in crowds to witness our performances. Ah! those were happy days!

“ I must relate a practical joke, which was played at one of these luncheons, on an old officer of the staff—a general favourite. This worthy, who went by the name of ‘ Boot,’ was a capital fellow and a *bon vivant*: His real name was ‘ Dixon.’ A wag, whose name I forget, thus addressed him:—‘ I say, Boot, you said the other day that you did not like ‘ hashed moose;’ now, do try it in the way our *maitre d’hôtel* cooks it.’ One of the servants at this moment handed

‘ Boot’ a well-dressed looking side-dish, resembling a bit of blanket, well enveloped in a ‘ Soyer’ sauce. ‘ Eh! what,’ said Boot, looking suspiciously at it, ‘ did I say so? well, here goes. I may be wrong. The sauce looks as if it would make anything palatable!’ ‘ Undoubtedly,’ answered the wag aside, winking to his brother-officers, some of whom had been let into the joke, ‘ as it is nothing more nor less than an old boiled mocassin, belonging to one of my Indians!’ ‘ Gad, my boys,’ continued Boot, working away with his jaws,—‘ I never tasted a better sauce; but it’s an old moose, I should say: it’s infernally tough!’ ‘ Ha! ha!’ roared the rest, ‘ What! it is tough—is it? Pray, don’t go on chewing so violently, or you may expire under the torture. Why, man, do you know what you are eating? because we do.’

“ The real state of the case was soon divulged. The astonished Boot, always a

plain man, now became positively hideous, as he ordered his servant to remove his plate; and I question greatly whether the story will ever be forgotten in Quebec,—certainly not as long as the ancient city is garrisoned by Englishmen.

“No; I should imagine not,” said John Cecil, whose risible faculties were greatly excited at the incident related by his friend; “but now for the moose-hunting. I begin to despair of ever getting you to commence your story.”

“Better late than never,” replied Horace. “I must first light another cigar. I do not feel at all inclined to go below.

“Soon after this, I obtained a fortnight’s leave of absence, having previously made all the necessary arrangements for the chase of the moose-deer, and practised two hours daily on snow-shoes, which is absolutely essential, and at first exceedingly hard work into the bargain. A brother officer, who was, and still is, a most intimate friend,

accompanied me. His name was Douglas ; a thorough sportsman, and as good a fellow as ever lived. The night before the start we got everything in order, examined our guns and rifles, and gave all our property in charge to our respective servants ; for in those days a fortnight's absence, on an expedition with the Indians, was considered no joke, and a service of some risk and hardship.

“ At six o'clock the next morning, a small sledge with one horse appeared at the door, when Douglas and myself issued from the house, attired in suits of the grey habitan cloth, with a blanket coat apiece, and stepped into the vehicle. Charley Welch stowed away the guns, snow shoes, and axes, which articles, and a very small carpet-bag each, constituted the entire ‘ impedimenta’ (as Murray has it) of the party. These preparations may seem inadequate for a fourteen days' residence in the ‘ Bush,’ as the

immense forests are here termed. No change of clothes—no beds, and no houses. The sequel will however shew that nothing more was in reality necessary.

“ The contents of the carpet-bags were two red flannel shirts; two pair of thick flannel socks, in case of rain; two spare pairs of mocassins; a couple of tooth-brushes; a sponge and hair-brush apiece; under mocassins—socks are not worn—square bits of thick blanket, called ‘ neaps,’ being substituted.

“ We had a twenty mile drive before us; therefore, when all was ready, we rolled ourselves up in our buffalo-skins, lit our short pipes (cigars are of course quite out of place on an expedition of this sort), and gave the reins to Charley Welch, who, attired like ourselves, cracked his whip, and away we went.

“ Our Canadian pony was a rare specimen of the breed, bounding along at a

sort of jerking pace, between a trot and gallop, exhibiting undeniable wind, and lasting qualities. The twenty miles were got over in two hours, the route lying over lakes, rivers, and large tracks of forest, during which period only two upsets took place, which only served to amuse us, and teach Charley how to drive a sledge. On arriving at the appointed spot, we perceived three Indians sitting under a tree.

“One of them talked a little French, and acted as ‘interpreter;’ the other two were ‘chiefs,’ that is, they swore they were, but they did not think it derogatory to their dignity to conclude a bargain with us, to the effect that we were to pay five dollars for every ‘moose,’ a large sum; but at that time so few Englishmen ventured out, that the wild men asked, and generally obtained, whatever sum they thought fit to demand.

“We now, one and all, buckled on our snow-shoes, and prepared for a start into the recesses of the forest, towards a place where one of the Indians knew of some ‘moose’ having been seen lately. The sledge was left in the only hut visible in these desolate regions, under the charge of an old French Canadian, and our pilgrimage commenced in the following order. Number one, the head savage; and a fine specimen of the tawny race he was, as he stalked along without uttering a syllable, at the rate of four miles an hour, to accommodate ourselves, who of course were not so much at home as they were on the snow-shoes.

“We followed our conductor, each carrying a gun, with cork stoppers in the barrels, and an axe apiece in our leather belts. Charley Welch was in our rear, with the carpet-bags slung across his shoulders, and finally came the other two Indians, draw-

ing the absolutely necessary articles for the encampment, on a small, long species of sleigh, called a 'tabourgin.'

"In this labour they relieved each other at intervals. The articles in question consisted of the buffalo-skins, a few poles, with a piece of canvass, a tin kettle, some bacon, peas, biscuits, pork, cheese, tea and tobacco; no spirits, as it is considered dangerous to tempt the Indians with liquor.

"The taciturnity of the savages was most remarkable; for miles the silence remained unbroken, except by an occasional exclamation, I fear oaths, from Douglas or myself, as we measured our lengths in the snow; when once down, it is extremely difficult on snow shoes to regain the perpendicular without assistance. The line of march lay through a thick pine-forest, gloomy in the extreme, with no road or pathway to guide the steps of the Indian, who, however, appeared quite at home; and con-

tinued plodding on till near dusk, when, in a sort of hollow, near some evergreen bushes, he suddenly stopped short, and, pointing to a sheltered spot, seemed to intimate that the day's travel was here at an end.

“ Our curiosity as to how we were to be made snug for the night was now on the *qui vive*, but the preparations soon commenced; we received instructions from the interpreter to follow the example of the rest in making ourselves useful.

“ We took off our snow-shoes, and watched the first movements of the Indians with curiosity and attention. They, without loss of time, commenced digging an enormous hole in the snow, using their snow-shoes as spades. In this we of course gave our ready aid. In ten minutes, we found our bed-room gradually enlarging, as a reward for our vigorous shovelings; it was four feet deep, and was cut right down to

the hard ground. The savages then cut down a couple of pine-trees with a few strokes of the axe, so managing, that one of them fell right across the centre of the 'caban,' or resting-place ; then numerous dry branches and piles of brushwood were heaped together in the middle, and set fire to, the kettle produced, and filled with snow ; all this was performed, as if by magic, with wonderful celerity, not a word being spoken.

“ Presently one of the Indians appeared, with his arms full of evergreens ; some of them were thickly, and in a peculiar manner, spread on the ground to act as a carpet, whilst the rest were placed on crossed sticks in the aperture above, leaving a considerable space open on one side, for the smoke to escape. We soon jumped *into* our 'house,' and while Charley Welch spread the buffalo-skins over the branches on the ground, one of the savages unpacked

the 'tabourgin,' and proceeded to act as cook for the party.

"Incredible as it may appear to you, Master John, I assure you that the comfort and warmth of the 'caban' were very great. In fact, nothing could be more luxurious, as, however cold it was outside, and I have no doubt it was pretty severe, we did not feel it, and I slept that night as well as I ever did in barracks or elsewhere.

"The delicious odour of the pea-soup now filled the air; presently we were all busily employed with it; after which some fried bacon, and bread and cheese, were quickly consumed, the appetites of the whole party being ravenous, and not easily appeased. We soon afterwards stretched ourselves lazily on the buffalo-skins, lit our pipes, and indulged in some interesting conversation relative to our position and prospect of sport.

It was six o'clock, and the moon had

just risen in great splendour. The novelty of the scene deeply impressed us, and we hailed with delight our first night's bivouac in the wilds of North America.

“Before composing ourselves to sleep, I recollect we endeavoured to probe the Indians as to the chances of sport; these worthies, however, shook their heads and said nothing, while Charley Welch stared at them with undisguised astonishment. The conversation by degrees flagged, and before long we were all in the arms of Morpheus. Then the savages arose, and, shrouding their dark forms in their blankets, silently left the ‘caban,’ for the purpose of cutting fire-wood, as it was their intention to leave us during the night, with the view of tracking out the whereabouts of the denizens of the forest.

“Before daybreak, they re-appeared, and soon after their return awoke us from our slumbers. Our toilet was soon made, and

after breakfast, the savages again departed on some mysterious journey, leaving us wrapt in amazement, and greatly excited as to the result of all their secrecy and woodcraft.

“The Indians remained absent upwards of three hours, during which time we continued in the ‘caban,’ preparing for the coming chase, and anxiously awaiting their return. At length they made their appearance, looking unusually grave, and the oldest gave the order for an immediate start. We perceived that something was in the wind. We all fastened on our snow-shoes with alacrity, loaded our guns, and lighted our short pipes, whilst Charley assisted the interpreter in packing the ‘tabourgin,’ and breaking up the encampment.

“Each man now carried a small portion of food in the shape of a slice of pork and some biscuit, together with a few peas, and some cold tea in a small flask. Each examined his

flint and steel, and stowed away an extra pair of mocassins under his blanket-coat, which precautions are absolutely necessary in case of becoming, either through accident or fatigue, separated from the rest of the party, when it is supposed, with these small means, a 'Moosehunter' will be enabled to support himself until the Indians come to his relief.

"All being now ready, we left the caban—the lead was taken as usual by the old Indian, who kept up a sharp long trot, preserving the strictest silence, occasionally stopping a moment to give us breath, or to confer in low tones with his tawny associates.

"The route lay along a large frozen river, which here cut its tortuous way through the immense snow-clad forests, which seemed indeed interminable! Mile succeeded mile! still the same prospect! the same wide-stretching succession of hill and dale, covered, as far

as the eye could reach, with dazzling snow!

“Our astonishment at the increasing gravity and important manner of the savages was very great; they looked far more sedate than most white men do at a funeral.

“The old leader at last stopped short, wet his finger, and then held it up for a second in the air, muttered something to himself, and dived sharply off to the right into the deepest recesses of the forest! Here the snow was much deeper—there was not the slightest indication of human feet ever having tracked these wilds before; the walking became much more difficult, and the patience of the Indian was frequently put to the test by our inability to follow him at the increased pace he had now adopted.

“At length, after an hour’s severe walking down steep ravines, and up rugged hills and brakes, our labours were rewarded by the

old boy ahead suddenly coming on the fresh track of a large 'moose.' To one, who for the first time sees a 'moose-track,' it appears, as if some animal quite as large as an elephant had been rushing through the snow, as, where he plunges, immense chasms are rent through the hard surface, caused by the difficulty so large a brute experiences in extricating his legs from so great a depth, as he sinks in his travel; on he goes; the crust above again gives way, again he struggles to get free, and so on, till he reaches his destination; so that the track thus left behind resembles a succession of large holes and freshly-turned-up snow.

"It must be here observed that the chances of coming up with a 'moose-deer,' depend greatly on the state of the snow, and the atmosphere. The frost ought to be sufficiently severe to freeze the surface of the snow to the depth of a foot; this allows the

hunters to move along glibly on the surface, in their snow-shoes, whilst the deer, from his immense weight, not only breaks through every stride he takes, but, when hard pressed, cuts the tendons of his legs in such a way as to lame him speedily, and thus cause him to fall an easy prey to his pursuers.

“When the snow is drifting, or the frost is not sufficiently severe, the most wonderful chases take place, the animal has more chances in his favour, and it is on record that the Indians have made their cabans and slept four consecutive nights on the track of the hunted ‘moose,’ and his ‘ravage’ or sleeping-place has been found by them, on resuming the hunt, each morning, within a hundred yards of where they themselves halted for the night!

“The snow on this occasion was, though frozen over, rather too slightly so, and the surface not sufficiently hard to ensure an

easy conquest over the moose. On perceiving the track, the old Indian suddenly knelt down, and, putting his nose to the ground, seemed to be endeavouring to smell out the probable date of its antiquity! His examination appeared to be satisfactory, for he quickly rose, giving a low grunt, re-seized his gun, and darted off at a 'Derby pace' on the track, followed by Douglas, myself, and the other Indians.

"On we rushed after our leader, who, by degrees, was gradually distancing us; we did our best, but it would not do, our breathing became every instant shorter and thicker, nature gave way, and in less than twenty minutes, we found ourselves, with Charley Welch, lying on our backs on a snow-heap, puffing and blowing like horses just detached from the Brighton 'Age' in its most palmy days.

"Douglas and myself had a good laugh at

each other's expense: as for the Indians, they treated our defeat with their usual indifference, merely looking round a moment, and then continuing their road on the track with redoubled speed and energy.

“ ‘ Well,’ I cried out, ‘ this is a pretty business; I fancy our chance of being in at the death is a rather small one! Those copper-coloured fellows might have waited a little, I think.’

“ ‘ It would have been more civil,’ replied Douglas, laughing. ‘ Let us however make the best of it; we can rest five minutes, regain our wind, and then make a fresh start of it; when, perhaps, some lucky accident may enable us to give them a view halloo!’ This advice was good, and in a short time we were again in motion.

“ The Indians meanwhile had gained considerably on the ‘ moose,’ who, to judge by the track he left behind him, was a large stag. He turned neither to the right nor

left, but led his pursuers down steep precipices, across deep ravines and gullies, where the Indians were often actually forced to swing themselves down, with the branches of the huge trees as a support, and then ascend the opposite bank by clinging to the pine-stems, as they toiled along.

“At length, the large river I have before alluded to again presented itself, at a sudden turn, to our view, and then for the first time we caught sight of the noble animal, who showed evident symptoms of distress, as he crawled slowly along the ice near the bank, sheltering himself as much as possible from observation.

“Here we redoubled our efforts, and reached an eminence overlooking the frozen river, where we halted, and, to our joy, descried the Indians far below us, toiling on in rapid pursuit.

“The prospect, from the spot whereon we stood, was magnificent and extensive.

Douglas proposed that we should remain, and keep our eyes upon the chase. I had barely acquiesced, when a loud shout from the Indians rent the air, as the 'moose,' finding himself so closely pressed, left the cover which had, till now, occasionally hidden him from our view, and boldly faced the open, as if he intended to cut straight across the frozen stream.

" 'What a splendid sight !' burst simultaneously from our lips; we cheered loudly—the savages, brandishing their guns, responded to our cry, as they emerged from the 'bush.' The river was, at least, a quarter of a mile in breadth; and, in the centre, exactly in the course of the hunted 'moose,' there appeared a large and dangerous air hole of considerable size, where the boiling water incessantly gurgled in a sort of rushing whirlpool, and then suddenly disappeared under the massive ice.

" Our excitement, you can easily imagine,

was here raised to the highest pitch, as we breathlessly watched every movement of the deer and his pursuers.

“ ‘ Look,’ cried Douglas, ‘ the moose can never clear that chasm; yet he steers at increased speed directly at it! Heavens, what a sight! Hurrah!’

“ It was, indeed, as he expected; the noble animal, who (with that instinct for which deer of all sorts are noted) seemed to be aware of his approaching doom should he not succeed in bounding over the hole, and thus place an impassable barrier betwixt himself and his pursuers, apparently collected all his remaining powers for the jump.

“ I shall never forget that moment,” continued Horace, in an animated tone of voice. “ I could count the pulsation of my heart, as, with straining eyes, I watched the last effort of the jaded moose as he rapidly approached the yawning chasm. In a few

seconds he reached it, collected himself, and gave a tremendous spring in the air. 'Magnificent!' I cried, 'he is over!'

" 'No; he falls!' exclaimed Douglas, equally excited as myself. The fates were against him—his forelegs only reached the opposite side of the ice—which, alas! gave way with his immense weight; and the baffled animal sank back exhausted into the rushing water.

"For a moment his large antlers, and enormous bulk, were seen turning over and over, as he struggled vainly in the whirling abyss; and, in an instant more, he disappeared for ever from our sight, being absolutely sucked by the greedy waters beneath the heaving ice at the further end of the air-hole, which thus proved his tomb—the final resting-place of the antlered monarch of the wilds. Our chase was over.

"We saw the disappointed Indians reach the spot. They carefully crept towards the

edge of the chasm, and held up their hands in mute astonishment. And then, looking wistfully into the waters, appeared to imagine that their prey had disappeared through the agency of the 'Great Spirit.' They shook their heads—lit their pipes, and retraced their steps towards the bank, where we joined them; and, with some difficulty, made them understand that we had witnessed the whole scene from the height above.

“The moon now rose—our 'caban' was again prepared—of course, we were dead beat; and glad enough, after a hearty supper—which consisted of tea without milk or sugar, and bacon, and biscuit—to stretch ourselves out for our night's rest, which was undisturbed. The next morning, at day-break, one of the savages, who had been absent the entire night, returned; and, with a look of joy, informed us that he had discovered a large 'ravage' a few miles

distant, which the moose (six in number) had only left on his near approach !

“ This was indeed glorious news. We soon got under weigh, and found ourselves much more at home on our snow-shoes than heretofore ; and the Indians now declared that we performed admirably. The ‘ caban ’ was, on this occasion, left in *statu quo*, the provisions, skins, &c., filling it, as we went in light marching order, the Indians expecting a severe chase, and saying from the nature of the ground it was not unlikely that it would be circuitous, so that we might possibly regain our encampment in the evening.

“ After a sharp walk, we reached the ‘ ravage ’ alluded to, and found a large, round, beaten space, in which the deer had rested. The snow was ploughed about, and heaped up on all sides, as if a regiment of cavalry had been at work, and the track, which was quite fresh, resembled a large road, as it wound its tortuous way through lofty pine

trees. The old savage informed us that the snow was in capital order, as it had frozen very hard during the night, and that he considered we should come up with the moose 'in an hour or less!' This intelligence was highly satisfactory. We adjusted our snow-shoes, and, at a given signal, off we went!

"The whole party, this time, kept well together, resting, every quarter of an hour, for a few seconds. We were soon rewarded. In less than half an hour, the Indians halted, and pointed stealthily into the 'far bush;' we looked, and with joy discerned no less than six moose-deer standing quite still, about nine hundred yards ahead. We took the stoppers out of our guns, and moved onwards. At first we gained little ground, as the herd took flight, and rushed violently forwards. The snow was absolutely ploughed up in all directions; and the Indians pointed exultingly to large spots of blood, which

stained the surface near the track. The deer were viewed several times, and our excitement rose on every occasion ; still they struggled on ; it was, however, of no avail !

“After ascending a long and arduous steep, on arriving at the summit, we beheld the whole of the moose, standing perfectly still in the valley beneath, eyeing the approaching enemy with wistful looks. The poor animals were dead beat : Nature could do no more. The Indians whooped, and each man advanced, under the cover of some large trees, to select his victim and lodge the deadly ball ! We knew that moose-deer are frequently dangerous when at bay ; we therefore kept a sharp look out, and followed the movements of our copper-coloured friends closely. I fired first at a noble stag ; the ball pierced his ear. He did not move. I fired again, and lodged the bullet in his heart. He gave one electric spring into the air, and fell stone dead among his companions, which,

roused by the reports and the death of their leader, rushed violently towards us. Douglas and the savages dodged round their pine-trees; and as the herd swept by, they all fired. My friend had the good fortune to kill right and left, a most unusual occurrence; the Indians slew another, so that only two escaped us.

“This wonderful success, after so exhilarating a chase, was most gratifying and unexpected. Our delight knew no bounds, and even the gravity of the tawny savages gave way before our animated gestures and congratulatory peals of laughter. A fire was immediately kindled, and the Indians commenced cutting up and cleaning the deer. Steaks were soon cooked and pronounced delicious. After the repast, large holes were dug in the deepest snow at hand, and the carcasses deposited therein. This done, we all returned, delighted with our day’s sport, to the caban.

“It is now getting so very late,” continued Horace, after a pause, “that I must finish my recital.”

“For which,” interrupted John Cecil, who had eagerly listened to the story, “I am exceedingly obliged to you. I declare I have almost fancied myself a spectator of the whole.”

“No doubt,” resumed Horace, “you will behold similar scenes, they are well worthy of your observation. There are peculiar sensations (which, however, I cannot exactly describe,) attached to this sort of independent roving life, for which I am certain your temperament is exactly suited, and I recommend you to try your hand on the very first opportunity. But to resume. We remained eight days longer in the Bush; and killed five Moose-deer, after which we returned to the garrison, with only one mishap, which was the breaking of the stock of my ‘Westley Richards’ gun, in crossing

a frozen lake, where I met with a very severe fall indeed.

“The actual slaying of the moose is in itself tame work enough, when compared to the glorious sport of stalking the red-deer in Scotland; the chief attraction is the thorough wildness of the scenery, and the novelty of the whole affair, affording, as it does, a thorough insight into the life and manners of the Indian race, which, now-a-days, can be seen in no other way, and I consider that one is well compensated in this manner, for the cold and fatigue which must necessarily be endured on such an expedition.

“I shall always look back to my sojourn in the ‘Bush’ with delight, though I will allow, that, everything considered, I was by no means sorry when the sledge deposited us safely at our own quarters in the good city of Quebec.

“Now for Bedfordshire,” said John Cecil,

“although I fear I cannot rest; you have excited my nerves so fearfully.”

They went below, and, notwithstanding the above prediction, were soon fast asleep, as they had been fortunate enough to engage two of the most airy berths on board.

CHAPTER IV.

They rose early, and gained the deck, as the steamer carried them rapidly past Sheerness, towards the greatest city in the world.

The weather was fine, though cold, the sun, which had just risen, not having as yet imparted its genial warmth around.

Is there any one capable of reflection, who, on entering the mouth of the Thames, is not struck with admiration and wonder, at the gradual development, as he is carried onward, through shipping, outward or homeward-

bound, to or from all quarters of the globe, of our great national resources, of our wonderful mechanical power, and of that indefatigable industry and perseverance, which have raised England above all nations?

“I recollect,” said Horace, “after my three years’ residence in Canada, the first sight of the shores of Old England struck me with positive amazement; and even now I never re-enter the land of our birth, without a feeling of awe and astonishment, at the picture which everywhere meets the view.

“It is not only our commercial interests, and the immense flotilla of shipping, which, independently of our Navy, scours the ocean far and wide; not only our manufacturing superiority, and mechanical genius, the results of which seem incalculable, that excite the interest; but also the highly cultivated and scientific agricultural arrangements of the soil, which at first

sight, after a sojourn in other lands, give our favoured country the appearance of a mighty garden ; so highly finished, so beautifully laid out, are all our fields, our farms, and country-palaces (for many deserve the name) of our merchants and aristocracy."

"Yes," replied John Cecil, "all foreigners are struck, more than with aught else, at the state of our fields, the hedges, the lovely turf, the fatness of the land, its colour, and the condition of the animals which everywhere abound.

"England certainly stands alone in this respect, and though there is much poverty, it is somehow so kept out of sight, that in a journey from any of our seaports to London, one seeks in vain for any indication of it, and fancies, comparing it with other countries, that one has at last entered the land of magic, where misery is but an idea, and where civilization has reached

such a pitch, that nothing seems wanting to add to our ease and felicity."

"Likemany other appearances," answered Horace, "it is fallacious; it but requires a better knowledge to be undeceived, for there is no country where the two extremes of luxury and poverty are more plainly exemplified; the causes of which I am not politician enough to explain. One thing, however, is certain, that our magnificence and power are everywhere apparent, and cannot be exaggerated, for there is no river in the world can vie with the Thames in interest, or the banks of which are so crowded with unmistakeable signs of prosperity and wealth. Just look around," continued he, as they rapidly passed Blackwall, Woolwich, and Greenwich; "London in reality has already commenced, although we have not entered what is called so: the mind positively gets confused with the number of the various objects which meet

the eye, and calculation is crippled, as to the origin and end, though the fact is visible, of the present state of things, including, as it does, a vast population, constantly employed in further enlargements, and higher improvements, in scientific, agricultural and mercantile pursuits."

"It is indeed wonderful," answered his friend, "and nothing is more remarkable than the regularity of the arrangements in the vast establishments, which lie crowded together, as if each spot of earth were greedily seized at a high price, and standing room were almost impracticable; also the certainty of the personal comfort which each individual, notwithstanding, who can pay for it, is ensured."

"Yes," replied Horace, laughing, "but you must allow that the payment is very necessary, for it is most true that in this highly-favoured land, the possession of money is indispensable, and that the instant one em-

barks even on board an English steamboat, the unlucky traveller finds to his cost that his personal expenses alone will amount to more than the sum, which would, and often does, keep a whole family in comfort, if not affluence, on the continent. There is the bell for breakfast; let us go and punish John Bull's beefsteaks and bad coffee, which I certainly cannot regard with the veneration due to his external glory, and vast resources!"

Breakfast over, they got up stairs in time to witness the Pool (that extraordinary sight); the endless steamers, the coal-barges, the wharfs, the docks, and forest of masts which issue from them; all met with their admiration and criticism, whilst the luggage was being got on deck, preparatory to that surveillance at the custom-house, which is worse conducted in our grand metropolis than in any other country, and is a standing disgrace to the nation.

Their luggage, however, was soon passed, as they were fortunate enough to be called early, and not kept waiting, as many people have been, for hours, in a small dingy room, worse than the parlour of a pot-house, before the authorities can render to them a carpet-bag or small portmanteau.

John Cecil insisted on going to the West end on the top of an omnibus, instead of being buried in the recesses of a cab; in order, as he said, thoroughly to enjoy the sights of the city.

Horace willingly acquiesced, and, as they moved slowly through this endless emporium of trade and commerce, the young men had ample food for conjecture and conversation, and John Cecil was loud in giving vent to his feelings of wonder and admiration. Horace had often witnessed the scene before, and although no one, whatever state of mind he is in, can be carried through such a locality without attention, his spirits

were too low for a thorough enjoyment of anything, as he reflected on the past, and felt most doubtful as to the reception he should meet with from his father. Arrived in Piccadilly, they left their luggage in the office, and John Cecil, who did not choose to intrude himself at our hero's first interview with his relatives, stated his determination to devote the day to giving his orders to army-tailors, upholsterers, &c., but agreed to meet Horace at four o'clock that evening to make their further arrangements; as Cecil had already acquiesced in Horace's proposal to accompany him to Scotland. The latter bent his steps, in no enviable mood, to Hertford-street; reached the well-known portal, rapped, and was admitted.

"Is Mr. Grantham at home?"

"Yes, sir," replied the butler, an old servant, who welcomed his master's son's return warmly; and with that civil but half familiar freedom, which long and trusty

service warrants, he asked after his welfare in earnest language.

“ I am quite well, thank you, Williams,” replied Horace, touched, as the conviction impressed itself on him, that there was at least one person, though of a humble station, who *really* welcomed him home; “ but I do not think you would have seen me so soon, had not important business brought me back to England.”

“ I know all about it, Mr. Horace,” said the honest man; “ for that letter you received was addressed to me; but as I did not know where you were, I was forced to give it to Mr. Grantham to forward to you. I only hope, Mr. Horace, some good may come of it.”

“ So do I, my good Williams,” replied Horace. “ Now shew me to my father.”

Horace’s heart beat quickly; for his noble nature, notwithstanding the treatment he had always met with, yet owned the influ-

ence of a natural attachment to his parent, as he was ushered by the old domestic to the familiar study-door. A rap was given. "Come in," said a voice from within, and, in a moment more, father and son stood alone together.

"What! Horace, is that you?" said Mr. Grantham, who looked in perfect health, and supremely happy. "How do you do? You look thin; not ill, I hope."

"Oh, no," replied his son; "I am quite well, and am very happy to find you looking so well."

"Oh, yes; I am quite well. I am always well; but then I take great care of myself. In fact, if I did not, how could I be the man I am at my age? Why, I don't look much older than you do," answered Mr. Grantham, in a gratified tone, as his thoughts reverted to his own health and prosperity.

"How is Mrs. Grantham?" asked Horace.

“ Oh, she is quite well also,” replied Mr. Grantham, “ though she eats and drinks far too much for a person of her constitution. I warned her; and, if she don’t choose to take my advice, why, it’s her fault, and she must take the consequences. Well, you got my letter, I suppose?”

“ Yes, sir,” replied Horace, crushed at the common-place and indifferent address of his father; “ and I thought it best to start for England immediately.”

“ That is *your* affair,” replied he; “ I have got nothing to do with it, and took care not to influence you one way or the other. I always find that the best maxim. It is nothing *to me*, you know.

“ I am perfectly aware of that,” replied Horace, who could not avoid being disgusted at this open display of selfishness, and acknowledgment of indifference as to his welfare; “ but I took the opinion of a friend well qualified to judge, and who ad-

vised my immediate departure for Scotland, to attend the interview with my anonymous correspondent."

"Good," said Mr. Grantham, who, like all weak men, relished giving a decided opinion, though without any reflection or interest in the matter. "I, for my part, never pay any attention to such communications; and I consider the whole thing a hoax from beginning to end, and that you will have your journey for nothing. But, as I observed before, that is *your* affair. I am sorry to say we have got no spare bedroom in the house; but you will dine with us to-day, I hope?"

Horace felt his blood boiling in his veins with indignation at this reception. He thought of the Cecils, and his self-command nearly gave way. He succeeded in checking himself, and with an effort, in a calm voice, thanked, yes, actually thanked his own father for an invitation to dinner,

though that father had, in the same breath, refused his only son,—who, he knew, was unable, without serious inconvenience, to pay for it himself,—a lodging for his head.

Reader, this picture may seem overdrawn; and, no doubt, for the honour of humanity, there are many who will think so, and believe that it is impossible for selfishness, and the worship of the world, to reduce a human being to so degraded a state as to act in the manner described; but it is not so. There are many, who, having become hardened by their own prosperity, and the fatal influences of fashion, are so deadened to all the natural dictates of duty and affection, that they, apparently unconscious of the enormity of their conduct, with ruthless hardihood, accustomed to be obeyed, and living for themselves alone, issue their unfeeling commands, and give full vent to their selfish sentiments, without a moment's consideration for the

feelings of others, or the certain contempt with which they themselves must be regarded by the highly-principled and virtuous. "You had better now go and see Mrs. Grantham," resumed his father: "we dine at eight o'clock."

Horace then mentioned that his friend, John Cecil, was in town, in hopes that his father might invite him to dinner.

Idle curiosity, being a component part of that individual's character, and having heard much to excite it regarding the Cecils, from Mrs. Grantham, who knew of Horace's great intimacy with the family, induced him to acquiesce in his son's wishes. "Oh, by all means, bring your friend. We shall be very happy to see him; only, don't be late," said he; for dinner, with Mr. Grantham, was an affair of vast importance.

"We shall be punctual, sir," said his son.

They shook hands and parted; the inter-

view having verified Horace's worst fears as to the unchangeable nature of his father's character, and the impossibility of warming him, by any means, into the least display of affection, or even common interest in his son.

Our hero found Mrs. Grantham in the drawing-room, surrounded with her novels, pets, and all the appurtenances of refined life. She was little changed ; the vacant and perpetual smile still illumined her rosy countenance, and though, in reality, she was equally devoted to luxury and display as her husband, she had the tact to conceal it, and to welcome Horace with some degree of apparent delight.

After the first salutations were exchanged, Mrs. Grantham, who really wished Horace well, led the conversation to the mysterious letter, the object of his present journey, giving it, as her decided opinion, that notwithstanding Mr. Grantham said she was a

fool, she was quite certain something would come out of it, although *what*, she wisely did not attempt to explain.

“Thank you heartily, for your good wishes ; at any rate, my dear Adelaide,” said Horace, “the matter will soon be cleared up, one way or another, for I must be off to Glasgow, at latest, the day after to-morrow. John Cecil, who has just obtained his commission, accompanies me. He dines here to-day.”

“How very pleasant,” returned the lady ; “your father has been in very bad temper lately, being worried about the railroads, which are very bad now, and we cannot afford to go about much in consequence. Do you know, your father actually did not hunt last winter!”

The lady said this in a tone of voice which implied that Mr. Grantham had undergone some desperate hardship, and

was, in consequence, the just object of commiseration. Horace smiled, and after having entertained his mother-in-law for half an hour, and listened to an immense quantity of local news with patience, which she inflicted on him, without his taking the most distant interest in it all, he took his leave, and proceeded to meet his friend at the Army and Navy Club, the place which they had appointed.

At eight o'clock, they sat down to dinner in Hertford-street. Mr. Grantham always appeared to advantage at table. He was in his element, and, as the French dishes were handed round, and the claret circulated freely, John Cecil could not help wondering how so agreeable a person could be, what he in truth was, a selfish and calculating man of the world. His manner to his son was friendly enough, exactly what it would have been to any other young man, polite

and easy, though totally devoid of any signs of more than a common interest stirring within him.

Mr. Grantham took an opportunity, after dinner, of telling Horace that he thought his friend a remarkably gentlemanly young man, which, in his opinion, was the highest possible degree of praise with which a mortal could be favoured, whilst his wife, completely captivated by John Cecil's good looks, and well-bred manner, exerted herself to be agreeable ; so that, altogether, the evening passed off very pleasantly, and Horace was not astonished, when, as they walked home to their lodgings together, Cecil launched forth in praise of all he had witnessed.

" I declare your father is one of the most agreeable men I ever met," said he.

" He is generally considered so," replied Horace.

" And Mrs. Grantham I think charming."

“She suits my father admirably,” answered Horace, in a vacant tone, as he was, at that moment, comparing the glitter of the empty show which thus imposed upon his friend, to the solid merits, and real worth, of the Cecils, under whose humble roof he had received so much kindness, and whose conduct had taught him, that though the possession of wealth is instrumental to our enjoyments, it is not, and cannot be, the permanent basis of a virtuous happiness.

Horace and his friend had only one day to spare, which was spent in giving orders at various shops for John Cecil’s outfit, his uniforms, camp-equipage, &c. This done, they dined together at the Army and Navy Club, vulgarly called the “Rag and Famish.” John’s name was duly entered on the books of the list of candidates for admission to this abode of luxury and dissipation; which now, in the newly-acquired possession of its gorgeous mansion in Pall Mall, fully

equals, if it does not outrival, all other clubs of the metropolis, both in its external magnificence and the arrangements of the interior.

In the evening, Horace called in Hertford-street, to make his adieux to his father and mother-in-law. The former said nothing remarkable; whilst the latter wished our hero "good luck," with emphasis; hoping, as she really did, that his adventure might terminate favourably; the idea of which never entered Mr. Grantham's head, or no doubt he would have at least affected a far greater interest in Horace's proceedings.

At eleven that night, they entered the mail train at Euston-square; and, with magic-like rapidity and ease, were conveyed swiftly, through the silent hours of darkness, a distance of some four hundred miles, and found themselves, at ten o'clock the following morning, on the last day of the month, at the end of their journey—the terminus of

the great length of railroad in the good city of Glasgow.

Horace, notwithstanding the prostration of his mind consequent on his position—which rendered him far more melancholy and downcast than he had been on his last visit to Scotland, two years previously—naturally was anxious and inquisitive as to the result of his present journey; the object of which had, of course, often been the subject of conversation since their departure from the Tyrol.

The only possible clue that he had as to the writer of the anonymous letter, was the remembrance of the vague words of interest and commiseration, dropped so hastily by Jones—and this was not sufficient evidence to justify him in attributing the communication to that individual—although, upon consideration, he was at a loss to imagine who else could, or would, have taken his part, and endeavoured thus to benefit him.

They wisely resolved not to visit Foster, who they knew, from report, was living in great splendour, till after the mysterious interview was over; and even then to judge, according to circumstances, and any intelligence they might gain, as to paying their respects to him.

The day was spent in recovering the effects of their nocturnal journey; and they did not leave the hotel (which was not the "Star") till four o'clock; at which hour, though in the country it was not nearly dark, the gas lamps glittered cheerily in the smoky town, and enabled them to spend an hour or two in promenading the streets, almost impassable from the numbers of the population, who issue forth in thousands towards dusk, no weather preventing them, to catch a breath or two of air—which, though not fresh, is all that they can obtain, and which suffices to invigorate many of these wretched creatures, who are born

to live and die within the precincts of Glasgow, and thus enable them to renew, on the morrow, that perpetual round of unnatural toil which, while it pours thousands into the coffers of the master, never, alas! from generation to generation, betters the condition, or diminishes the oppression, which is perpetually exercised on the poor slaves themselves.

CHAPTER V.

AT the appointed hour, the next morning, they proceeded, it must be allowed with great anxiety, to the Star Hotel; and having given their cards to the waiter, requested to be shewn to an apartment, asking whether anybody had called, inquiring for Mr. Horace Grantham. The reply was in the negative; so they had nothing for it but to betake themselves to the sitting-room and await their doom.

“Well, Horace,” said John Cecil, with the vivacity of his age; “your friend can-

not say we are behind time. I only hope he won't keep us long waiting; for, to be candid with you, I am already tired of this den of filth and smoke, and heartily wish myself back in London."

"My dear fellow," replied Horace, "if I am not hoaxed altogether—which my father expects, and I myself think very probable—we shall soon know my fate; which decided, there is nothing to detain us here, and we can return forthwith. I am only sorry you were induced to accompany me."

"Stuff, Horace!" answered Cecil, "I was only joking; but you must allow that Glasgow is the most horrible place in the world. Do just compare it with the Tyrol. Could one believe it possible that there exist, on the same earth, two places so entirely dissimilar? How any one can expect to enjoy health or good spirits here, I am at a loss to understand. What say you?"

"Why," replied Horace, laughing; "as far

as I am concerned, I heartily concur with you. Yet, there are thousands who, from habit and self-interest, greatly prefer a residence in this murky city to an abode elsewhere; their whole ideas, and all their powers, both mental and physical, being concentrated in one sole object—the attainment of wealth.”

“ Well, all I can say is, give me a competency—nay, poverty—in the country,” continued Cecil, “ for, of what avail is money, if the acquisition of it is to be attended with such drawbacks, and the sunny hours of youth spent in so desolate and cheerless a locality?”

“ I believe all people, with few exceptions, at your age, argue as you do, and not unnaturally,” resumed Horace; “ but many live to repent having lost opportunities of entering business when young; which almost always, in the end, repays, with interest, the exertions of our youth, and en-

tures, in old age, a competency for ourselves; and, better still, the pleasing recollection that we have provided for our children, and therefore have not toiled in vain. Look at the position of the Fosters. I have often heard my grandfather, when alive, relate their career; and there are many similar examples of the success of perseverance, and regular habits in business life, which, when, as you say, the price that is paid for it is considered, seems fair and just."

"Yes," said John Cecil, who was resolved to say all he could against the odious labours of the counting-house; "but, like everything else, it is, in a great degree, a matter of mere luck; for one man who makes his thousands, how many are there, equally deserving, who slave their life away in subordinate situations; useful and necessary, no doubt, to the more fortunate 'Dives,' who directs their labours, whilst pursuing

his own fortunes ; but they, like that poor man Jones I have heard you mention, never can raise themselves above mediocrity at farthest ; and die, as they were born, the inhabitants of a garret, wretched examples of their class, which, in reality, form by far the greatest portion of a mercantile community. How many also are suddenly hurled from the pinnacle of prosperity, by some sudden turn of Fortune's wheel, which no worldly prudence or foresight could have anticipated !”

“ Your remark is true enough,” answered Horace, “ but the same argument applies to all professions. The ‘many’ toil invariably for the benefit of the ‘few ;’ our Judges, Bishops, Generals, and Statesmen sufficiently testify this ; it is, in the nature of things, unavoidable, though apparently unjust ; and, as the high situations I have just mentioned must be perpetually filled up, as death causes vacancies, it follows naturally that those who have

genius, opportunity, education, and, more necessary still, perseverance and personal interest, succeed them ; though, there can be no doubt, that the unjust extent to which family patronage is carried often places those in responsible and lucrative situations to the exclusion of others, who, both by their talents and industry, are in reality much better qualified for the appointments. I often wish I had been brought up for trade, as then, no doubt, I should now have been in a very different position to what I am, as I should have been admitted long ago as a partner to my grandfather, and succeeded to that which Foster now enjoys—the management and profits of a large and flourishing business.”

“ Which, in reality, he meant you should at least have your share of,” broke in John Cecil, “ and if this ‘ dark man ’ would arrive, no doubt we should hear something which would prove my father’s and my own conjectures to be right.”

"It is an hour and a half past the appointed hour," said Horace, looking at his watch, "we cannot wait here all day."

"Nil desperandum," continued Cecil; "now we are here, do not let us throw a chance away. Ring the bell, and order some luncheon to kill time."

Horace did so, and again inquired for information from the waiter, who was perfectly unable to give them any intelligence on the subject.

Luncheon discussed, which occupied another half hour, and no arrival taking place, the young men looked at each other with some sort of dismay; each moment convincing Horace that his journey was fruitless, and causing the sanguine Ensign at last to express some doubts as to their success.

"At any rate," said the latter, rising from the table, as the clock on the mantelpiece struck three, "let us go and call on your

friend Foster ; he may be able to give us some clue to the writer."

"Possibly," replied Horace. "My patience is exhausted, and I am curious again to visit and inspect the establishment of a man, who, though not my friend, has managed, somehow or other, to step into my shoes."

Saying they would call again, the friends now left the hotel, and walked towards the mansion of the Fosters.

Ever since the memorable scene, which, our readers recollect, had occurred between Foster and Jones, the clerk in the counting-house, relative to the forgery and fatal deed, the latter had been a prey to remorse and sorrow. His health, never strong, and latterly much broken by long confinement, had now completely given way. Overcome with apprehension, his body weak, and peace of mind destroyed, he was now a wretched invalid, almost incapable of attending to his

daily work; still, as long as the powers of nature lasted, with admirable fortitude he was regularly to be seen at his post, earning his bread, though the hand of death had set its mark upon his emaciated countenance.

This could not last; Foster marked his state, and with fiendish joy hoped that the grave would soon close for ever the poor man's career. He proffered assistance, which Jones indignantly refused, remaining at his work, till one morning the intelligence reached the counting-house that the poor fellow was ill of a raging fever, which left slight hopes of his recovery.

Foster immediately, though with no charitable purpose, hurried to his abode, and found his clerk raving with delirium, at times totally insensible, at others, calling aloud for mercy, and muttering incoherently.

The rooms in which the family of the Jones lived were on a fifth story in the

suburbs, in one of those lofty houses which contain many families huddled together in a space not fitted for half the number, where the signs of poverty, and all those makeshifts which the wretched use for momentary comfort, were fully apparent. His wife, overcome with grief, had become almost incapable of attending to him, and the poor children sat or played around, the elder half conscious of their father's state; whilst the younger, in happy ignorance, revelled on the floor in play, or called aloud for bread.

Foster, hardened as he was in guilt, could scarcely witness such a sight unmoved. He consoled Mrs. Jones, who, totally ignorant of all that had passed, saw in him only the kind friend, and thanked him warmly for his opportune visit, and offers of pecuniary assistance, which she accepted.

"Ah! sir," said she, in broken accents, "heaven bless you! If my poor husband

dies, what will become of us all? I cannot bear to lose him."

"What did the doctor say, Mrs. Jones?" asked Foster.

"He just said nothing," replied the poor woman. "He shook his head, and ordered everything in the house to be kept quiet. By Heaven's mercy he will call soon again."

"I will take care that he does, Mrs. Jones, and will order my butler to bring anything from the house you may wish for your husband, or what the doctor orders," answered Foster; for he judged the poor man was past human aid, and therefore resolved to be charitable.

He then left the house, satisfied that Jones's speedy demise would remove the object of his apprehensions for ever from his way, and thus render the management of Horace, whom he daily expected, a matter of much greater ease, and less anxiety, than he had imagined.

The scene described took place the very day that Horace and John Cecil arrived in Glasgow; and Mrs. Jones listened, with terror and dismay, to her poor husband's ravings, whose mind, though greatly confused, ran on the proposed interview with Horace, whose name, in his delirium, repeatedly passed his lips, calling aloud about wills, forgeries, &c., and groaning heavily.

Towards evening, he dropped into a heavy slumber, the children were all dispatched to a neighbour's house to ensure quiet, and the poor wife, having tidied the apartment, took up her work, and sat down by his bedside to watch. Two hours past silently. Mrs. Jones hoped that this sleep might work a change in her husband, who at last opened his eyes, and fixed them steadfastly on her countenance.

"Mary, my dear," he said in a low voice, "I feel better."

"Thank God!" she replied.

"Tell me what I have been saying, for I know I have been wandering and talking aloud," continued he, rising in his bed, anxiously.

"Dear Hector," said the timid woman, "I know not; something about a will you said, and dear Master Horace, but I could not exactly make it out."

"Ah, yes," continued the sick man, passing his hand over his brow. "What day of the month is it, Mary?"

"It's just the first, Hector, but what ails you? The Doctor said you must not speak; lie down, I pray."

"Mary, my dear wife," said the poor man, "do not weep, I feel that I am about to die, and as I know not how soon, I thank God that I have yet power left me to clear my conscience of a heavy load."

Mrs. Jones burst into tears, for, as he uttered the last words, her husband fell

back in a fainting fit, and looked, indeed, as if death were already near. Fortunately, the doctor entered at this moment. With his assistance, Jones was brought by degrees to a state of consciousness, though it was apparent to the medical man, that he could not survive many days. He, therefore, though in a feeling manner, told Mrs. Jones his opinion, and left, to order some medicines for the invalid—whose case was hopeless. Towards evening he rallied considerably, took some weak tea, and mustering all his strength, spoke to his wife as follows:—

“Mary, dear, listen to the last words of a dying man, and do his bidding—for my time is short—and I cannot die happy unless I am obeyed.”

“Do not talk so!” returned the wretched wife. “There is yet hope; you are much better than you were.”

“The fever has left me,” replied he, “but

I feel that death is not far off. Mary, go yourself quickly to the Star Hotel, and ask for Mr. Horace. Heaven grant he may be there! If he is, bring him to me instantly, for I have much to say to him. Now I cannot speak more: go instantly, or it may be too late!"

The clock tolled ten heavily at this period. Mrs. Jones, impressed by the solemnity of her husband's words, saw the necessity of obeying him. She called a charitable friend from another part of the house to watch her husband, put on her bonnet and shawl hurriedly, and was soon in the streets, on her way to the hotel, which was a long distance from the part of the town they lived in.

It was about two o'clock when Foster had left the Jones's that morning; he went straight home, and had not long been seated in his library, when the door bell rang, and he heard some visitors admitted, who were shown into the drawing-room.

This was unusual. He had not time for reflection, for the butler entered, and informed him that two gentlemen, strangers, were waiting his presence.

Foster felt almost certain that Horace had, indeed, arrived; and he collected himself for the space of five minutes, during which he kept his visitors waiting for the interview. In that short space, he resolved how to act; he made up his mind to pretend total ignorance of the affair; and, by extreme civility, to occupy Horace's attention, and, if possible, distract his thoughts from the object of his visit, until after Jones's death, when all causes of apprehension would be for ever removed.

He entered the drawing-room; and, with a cheerful smile, welcomed Horace to Scotland; was introduced to John Cecil—he started slightly when he heard the name—and made anxious inquiries after the health of Mr. and Mrs. Grantham.

“And what brings you, Mr. Horace, to Scotland?” said he, after they were all seated.

“Faith, you are the last man I should have dreamt of beholding; your father wrote me word you were fishing in Austria—though,” added he, jocosely, “we can give you just as fine sport in bonnie Scotland.”

“Why, Mr. Foster,” answered Horace, “you owe the pleasure of seeing me to a strange circumstance—concerning which, I am in hopes you can give me, perhaps, some information.”

He then related, shortly, all that had passed.

“Wonderful!” replied Foster, laughing, though a smile sat but badly on his withered countenance. “Quite romantic, I declare. I dare say, Mr. Horace, it is some fair lady who wishes to see you, and now regrets her rashness. But it behoves you to remain and endeavour to find out the writer; though, upon my word, I can give you no assistance whatever in the matter.”

“I feared you could not, Mr. Foster,”

said Horace, "but I have yet hopes that something may occur, before our departure for London, to enlighten us."

Foster thought of poor Jones, and he devoutly prayed that his death might occur, to prevent the possibility of an interview.

"I hope your friend and yourself will dine with me to-day, at six o'clock," continued Foster, who thought it best to keep Horace as much as possible under his own observation for the next twenty-four hours. "I have a few friends to dinner, who will be much honoured by an introduction to you."

"What do you say, Cecil?" said Horace, turning to his friend.

"Oh! I shall be most happy," replied he, bowing to Foster.

"Very well—we will now take our leave, as it is past three o'clock," added Horace, rising.

“Recollect six o’clock, young gentlemen,” said Foster, as he escorted them to the door.

“By-the-bye,” exclaimed Horace, turning round on the steps and addressing Foster, who held the door ajar, in the act of making his adieu to them. “What has become of old Jones, your clerk? I wish to see him. That poor fellow always shewed the greatest affection for me, and I must not leave Glasgow without visiting him.”

Foster felt that a bold stroke was necessary; that *on no account* must Horace see Jones, even in his present state. He, therefore, answered, without hesitation, as follows:—

“How very unlucky! Jones started to London only yesterday, with some law papers of importance, which required a trusty messenger. I fear he will not return for some days.”

“I am very sorry to hear it, indeed,” re-

plied Horace ; “ but I am always unlucky, and must hope to catch him in town on my return ; for I think we shall probably be off to-morrow, as there seems no likelihood of our doing any good by remaining longer.”

“ Ha, ha !” continued Foster ; “ not if you allude to your mysterious letter. I candidly confess, I do not think there is ; but we can talk it all over this evening.”

He bowed, and shut the door—returned to his library, and rang the bell quickly.

“ Send the boy immediately to Mr. Jones’s house, to ask how he is,” said he to the butler, on his entrance ; “ and, stop—take this note to Dr. Wilson. There are two more gentlemen coming to dinner to-day. Does Mr. James dine at home ?”

“ He does, sir,” replied the domestic.

“ Very well—put out some champagne, and lay the best service of plate,” continued the master, who resolved to display his wealth—and, by a free circulation of wine

and whiskey, if possible work himself into the good graces of his guests.

These orders given, Foster was again alone, meditating deeply on his arrangements. Altogether, he was satisfied with the state of things; though, as long as Jones lived, and Horace Grantham was in the same town, he could not feel perfect security. There seemed every likelihood that Jones could not long survive; and an answer which he received shortly from Dr. Wilson informed him that, though the poor man might live a few days, his dissolution was certain, and could not be long deferred.

“What a very disagreeable man Foster is,” said John Cecil to Horace, as they walked towards the Star again. “I never saw a more unprepossessing countenance. I am sure he is a mean, low, character.”

“Low enough by birth,” replied Horace; “but I never heard anything against his character. As to his physiognomy, I

agree with you—but appearances are often deceitful. I wonder what has become of the son, James. I only hope we shall not meet him at dinner; for what I recollect of him is not at all flattering, as he is in every way far less bearable than his father.”

“Well, here is the Star again,” continued Cecil; “let us go in, and make fresh inquiries.”

“By all means,” replied Horace. They did so, but to no purpose. Much disappointed, they returned to their hotel to dress for dinner, and at six o’clock again rapped at the door of Foster’s residence.

Old Foster had asked the butler whether his son dined at home, with some trepidation; and the reply in the affirmative annoyed him much. This young man, so little known to our readers, had latterly gained a complete ascendancy over his father, through the influence of fear; and Mr.

Foster knew that, however desirable it might be, any attempts on his part to induce him not to appear would be entirely fruitless. James Foster, for the last two years, having, in consequence of his father's altered fortunes, escaped from the trammels of the counting-house, had devoted his whole time to dissipation of the lowest description, and in the very worst society. He had become a confirmed drunkard, lost entirely to the most remote feelings of honour and duty—a sort of swaggering ruffian, whose very appearance in civilized company was almost an insult; for his whole manner and conversation, even if sober—which was seldom the case—bore unmistakable signs of his habits, and the degradation of his mind. His father had long ceased to exert any authority over him—supplying him with money extorted by fearful threats, which often even extended to personal vengeance if refused him.

It can therefore be easily imagined that Mr. Foster heard, with some dismay, of Mr. James's intention of dining at home on a day on which, though bent on apparent hospitality, all his energies were at work to avoid any discovery of his secrets, which, though sacred to him, were not so to his son, whose swaggering impertinence, and want of caution, might, he feared, somehow or other compromise his designs. However, his habits of life were so irregular, and latterly he had so seldom seen him, that the old man hoped he might yet luckily be absent; and comforting himself with this idea, he set about making preparations for the banquet.

CHAPTER VI.

THE dinner-party consisted of Mr. Macfarlane, the lawyer, several merchants, the host and his son, and our two friends, who, on being ushered into the drawing-room, went through a formal introduction to the black-coated gentry. James Foster not yet having made his appearance, dinner was at last announced, and all proceeded to the dining-room, where a magnificent repast was spread, with all the delicacies of the season, including the celebrated Glasgow punch.

Foster, who almost forgot the weighty affairs which agitated his breast, at the sight of his own grandeur, seated himself, with all the dignity of a *parvenu*, at the head of the table. Horace was on his right: Cecil was next his friend. The others seated themselves indiscriminately.

At this moment, James Foster entered the apartment. A dead silence immediately reigned, for all intuitively felt that an unwelcome guest,—a dangerous and desperate man,—had joined the circle. Indeed, it was impossible to look upon James Foster without feelings of dread and apprehension. His coarse and bloated countenance was inflamed by intemperance,—the expression of his eyes was fierce and brutal,—whilst his unsteady gait, and reckless manner, indicated too clearly, that, even then, as he seated himself heavily at the further end of the paternal board, he was under the influence of drink.

Horace, who had seen the young man before, though he was not acquainted with him, was much shocked, whilst John Cecil stared with astonishment, as Horace told him in a whisper he beheld his host's only son. That individual did not address the new comer, but he eyed him anxiously, and proceeded to perform, in the best manner he was able, the duties of his station.

James Foster spoke carelessly, in a low gruff voice, to those near him; and by degrees, as the repast continued, and the punch and champagne invigorated their nerves, the guests regained their composure, and the conversation became more general. Mr. Macfarlane, who sat opposite Horace, was a *bon vivant*, and an excellent man in his way. He claimed acquaintance with our hero, who recollected having seen him at his grandfather's funeral. This led them to speak of the old gentleman; and Horace was gratified to hear the good

opinions with which all present seemed to have regarded him.

Before the second course was on the table, it became evident to Horace, and to every one else, that James Foster, if he continued imbibing the quantity of liquor which he did, would get into a state of fearful intoxication. Already his manner had changed to one of noisy freedom: he talked loudly, laughed boisterously, and drank wine with every one, though the gentlemanly and quiet demeanour of Horace and his friend had as yet deterred him from addressing (though not from impertinently staring at) them.

“Who the devil has the old governor got up there?” said he, in a low voice, to the gentleman on his left hand; “d——me, I think I know one of them—that proud-looking chiel—he looks as if he wouldn’t drink wine with a king; but I’ll try him myself directly. What’s his name?”

"I believe that is Mr. Grantham," replied the gentleman.

"Whew!" answered James Foster, putting his tongue in his cheek, with a vulgar look of knowing significance; "the devil! he has not much reason to be proud, I think. Why, he has not got a shilling in the world: I know all about him."

Emboldened by this reflection, the young man called aloud on Horace to take wine. The latter bowed stiffly, and filled his glass with sherry.

"Hand the champagne to Mr. Grantham, John," roared James Foster.

"I drink sherry, thank you," said Horace.

"The devil you do," continued Foster; "that's bad taste. Who drinks sherry when champagne is to be had without paying for it, which nobody does here, thank Heaven!"

"I do," replied Horace calmly, slightly

moving his head to James Foster, who was in the act of raising a large glass-full of champagne to his mouth; for he was too much disgusted to be angry, and felt that, in common civility to the father, who sat on tenter hooks as he noticed the increasing intoxication of his son, no notice need be taken of the incivility and unwarrantable freedom of the latter.

Mr. Macfarlane, who saw the state of affairs, here turned the conversation, and dinner proceeded, though the increasing noise, and vulgar mirth at the bottom of the room, occasionally interrupted by a hard knock on the table with his hand, as the young man vociferated loudly, clearly indicated that the wine had entirely got the better of James Foster, and rendered him, as his father feared, both incautious, unmanageable, and highly dangerous.

The presence of his father seemed in no way to deter him in his conduct, which

every moment became more brutal and offensive,—more noisy and ungentlemanly.

“ Mr. Cecil, a glass of wine,” said old Foster.

“ With pleasure,” replied John, who had been watching with amazement, and some degree of amusement, the extraordinary scene.

“ Mr. who?” said James Foster aside to his neighbour,—“ Whom did the governor say ?”

“ Mr. Cecil,—Mr. Grantham’s friend,” answered he.

“ Mr. Cecil!” repeated Foster. “ I can’t make out what the devil is the matter to-night; all my friends seem to have arrived at once. Who is he?”

“ That I cannot inform you, Mr. James,” said his friend, “ for I never heard the name till to-night.”

“ I have, my old boy, though,” called Foster, aloud, “ and d—n me, my old brick,

if we don't drink his health," added he; hitting an old man of sixty, who sat on his right, a familiar whack on his back—"fill your glass, I say!"

"Certainly," said the terror-struck individual. "Whose health did you say, sir? With pleasure."

"Why, Mr. Cecil's, to be sure!" called the intoxicated man, in a loud voice. It was impossible that John Cecil could avoid hearing his name, which was thus bandied openly about, being mentioned. He turned his head towards the speakers, and instantly caught James Foster's eye fixed resolutely upon him.

"We are drinking your good health here, Mr. Cecil, though I don't know who the deuce you are," roared out James Foster. "Will you join us?"

"Why," replied Cecil, laughing good-humouredly, in which the rest of the company joined, "it is not usual for a man to

drink his own health; but if you insist on it, I can have no objection; and also beg to drink yours in return."

"Bravo, bravo!" said James Foster, flattered at the cordiality of John Cecil's manner, for, till quite intoxicated, he had not had courage to address either of them. "You're a brick; *like all the Cecils*—your health!"

"What does he mean?" whispered Cecil to Horace.

"I should not imagine he knows, himself," replied his friend, "for he is dead drunk, and I expect some violent scene shortly."

The position of the host was most pitiable. The desert was now on the table, and the servants had retired. Mr. Foster rose, and proposed her Majesty's health; which being duly drunk, with all the honours, the bottles were pushed round, and the citizen gentry, nothing loath, commenced a formidable attack on the rare old port, and fine claret, which invited their regards.

Horace was in no mood for festivity; as is often the case, his thoughts were far away; thus verifying the proverb that in no place can a man be said to be more completely alone, than in the midst of a noisy crowd, uncongenial to his habits, and frame of mind. He sat silently, gazing on the table, unconcerned as to what was passing around; only wishing that the party would break up, and leave him to brood in solitude over his misfortunes, and disappointed hopes.

Not so with John Cecil; naturally vivacious, and extremely susceptible to the ludicrous, his youth, and the champagne he had imbibed, though not to any excess, caused him rather to enjoy, than otherwise, the festive scene, and Horace smiled, as his friend, at each vulgar joke, or attempt at wit, of any of the company, uttered in the broadest Scotch, touched him under the table; evidently with difficulty repressing

his own laughter. Many toasts were proposed and drank, and the night waxed late. Several old gentlemen were observed at last, after having related all the good jokes they knew, probably for the hundredth time, to shew signs of dropping asleep, and reluctantly passed the bottles on their accustomed tour around the board.

“Governor!” now called out James Foster, for the first time addressing his parent, “let us have some of your grand Scotch whiskey; the fame of which, I’ll take my oath, must have reached Mr. Cecil’s ears, ere now.”

“I have never tasted Scotch whiskey, Mr. Foster,” replied John Cecil.

“Ha, ha!” continued the former, who was completely intoxicated, and ardently bent on prolonging the festivities to a late hour, “Gentlemen,” added he, rising and balancing himself against the table, for he could scarcely stand, “here is a man who

has never tasted Scotch whiskey. But before it comes, I am going to propose a toast, and, gentlemen, every mother's son of ye must fill his glass and drink it!" And the eye of the speaker glared savagely round.

Old Foster, petrified with fear, gazed stupidly at his son, but said nothing, for he had not an idea what was coming, and therefore did not know whether to try and prevent it or not.

"Is everybody ready?" stammered out James Foster, still standing.

"Certainly," resounded many voices, John Cecil's amongst the rest, who was highly amused.

"Then I propose," continued the speaker, "the health of Miss Cecil, or rather, Mrs. James Foster, that is to be, the bonniest bride in Scotland!"

"Hear, hear!" cried the company, no doubt considering that, notwithstanding the

man was inebriated, he had some sort of authority for such a statement, though it was the first time they had heard it.

The words uttered by James Foster struck Horace Grantham almost senseless, with a lightning shock. The whole thing was so sudden, so unexpected, that he could not collect his thoughts; he heard the speech, the name of one dearer to him than his own life pass the lips of the low-bred ruffian who had uttered it, and yet it was so incomprehensible, so apparently ridiculous and unworthy of a moment's credit, that he knew not how to act, and breathlessly awaited further explanation.

Not so John Cecil; the words had hardly passed the wretched man's lips before he was on his legs, his face flushed with indignation and his voice trembling with rage, as he thus addressed him:—

“Sir, here is some mistake. I insist on an explanation this moment—what Miss Cecil do you allude to? there are many.”

"There may be many," replied James Foster, who had not a notion that there was any relationship between the person he was speaking of and the determined youth who thus addressed him, or he might have been more cautious, "there may be many;" repeating his sentence in that manner peculiar to a drunken man, "but there is only *one* for me, and d—n it, Sir, if you don't choose to drink her health, why, you and I shall quarrel, that's all."

"Sir!" replied John Cecil, "I am in no mood for trifling; I insist on hearing the Christian name of the lady you have mentioned—her Christian name, Sir, I beg, and that without delay," he added, in an authoritative tone.

"*Miss Amy Cecil,*" distinctly replied James Foster.

"Infamous liar!" cried Cecil, springing with one bound towards the speaker, and seizing him by the throat, the rest of the

company, including Horace, rising from their seats suddenly, "it is Amy Cecil's brother who is here to defend her name. Instantly retract the words you have uttered, which are, as you well know, false and calumnious, or I hurl you from the room!"

James Foster was a powerful man, but John Cecil was equally so. The attack was sudden, and the former struggled impotently to free himself from the iron grasp of his antagonist.

"Let him go, John!" said Horace, "or you will strangle him! He cannot speak. Recollect also that he is intoxicated!"

Thus appealed to, John Cecil, whose passion had reached a fearful height, shook his man violently, repeating the words, "rascal, villain!" tremulously, and then released him, only, however, to seize him again by the collar, and demand a fresh explanation, retraction, and apology.

James Foster was fairly cowed: panting

for breath, and partially sobered by the severe handling of our friend, his face pale with apprehension, he stammered forth some unintelligible language, in which the words "pardon" and "no insult intended," were alone distinctly audible.

Old Foster now put in his word, and requested Cecil to release his son, saying that there might be a mistake. The other guests also entreated for him, and Horace himself felt that, whatever had been said, the speaker was already sufficiently humbled and punished for the crime, and had received at John Cecil's hands that sort of personal chastisement which no gentleman can undergo from another without a duel becoming the result.

"Gentlemen," said John Cecil, "I request that no one leaves the room till Mr. Foster has explained himself—I trust in a satisfactory manner."

James Foster, released from immediate

contact with Cecil, had a moment's time for reflection, and he determined to revenge himself on his enemy, whatever the consequences might be to himself, by repeating his assertions, and offering to produce the letter which poor Amy had signed, as evidence of her consent to their union.

"Mr. Cecil has, I think, behaved in a very extraordinary way to me," said the cowardly ruffian, who had not the courage even to endeavour to resent the onslaught, which had all but overwhelmed him; "I merely stated what is true, and instead of retracting, I repeat it."

"What, Sir?" said Cecil, in a menacing tone.

"Your sister, Mr. Cecil," continued Foster, "is engaged *to me*. We have been engaged for two years, and I give you full license to appeal to herself as to the truth of my assertion!"

This speech struck astonishment into all

present, but to none more so than to John Cecil himself. Horace had listened attentively, and marked narrowly the features of Foster as he thus spoke; and he was struck with despair and horror as the dreaded words again, in a determined tone, thus issued from the lips of the debased profligate before him.

Foster saw in a moment the advantage his absolute statement had given him, and like all cowards, fancying the feelings of those present had turned in his favour, he commenced blustering again, talking of unwarrantable behaviour, satisfaction, &c.

“Sir!” said Horace, who now perceived the very awkward position of his friend, “you have repeated your statement regarding Miss Cecil. Both her brother and myself are convinced that, however much appearances may be in favour of the truth of such an assertion, there is some mistake. But this is no time nor place for a further explanation.”

“Stop, Horace!” cried John Cecil; “I do not believe a word he has uttered. It is impossible. Neither my father nor myself ever heard of Mr. Foster before.”

“I beg your pardon there,” broke in James Foster, with a sneer. “I know your father perfectly; and you will find, when further informed, that we are better acquainted than you imagine.”

These unexpected words again caused an awkward pause. Horace felt that their position was an extremely awkward one, and wisely resolved at once, if possible, to end a scene, which, from the confusion which prevailed, and the conflicting statements of the parties engaged, did not seem likely ever to reach either a termination, or even an approach to an understanding on the subject at issue.

He therefore addressed himself to old Foster, who had been a silent, though by no means an unobservant spectator, cursing in

his heart the awkward folly of his son, in thus creating so unnecessary a fracas about an affair, which, although he knew of his son's engagement, if such it could be called, to Miss Cecil, he himself was perfectly indifferent concerning.

"I think, Mr. Foster," said Horace, "we had better retire, and however much your son's conduct has been marked with impropriety, I beg to apologize to you for the disturbance created."

"Do not mention it, Mr. Grantham," answered Foster. "No doubt, to-morrow further explanations can be made. I know something of the affair; but my son is a great trouble to me, Mr. Grantham. His conduct is always most extraordinary."

"My dear John," said Horace, addressing his friend, "I have arranged to see Mr. Foster to-morrow morning, early."

"As early as you like," said James Foster, whose courage was fast reviving, "when I

shall be able to satisfy you both, that you have judged too quickly on the occasion."

"Let us go," replied Cecil to Horace, not noticing the words of the last speaker. "I agree with you. Nothing can be done to-night. What o'clock is it?"

"Half-past ten," said Horace, looking at his watch. "Mr. Foster, I wish you good night. I shall call early to-morrow."

Cecil bowed slightly to his host, and taking his friend's arm, they left the apartment together, being accompanied into the hall by the rest of the guests, who had remained, some from curiosity, others in hope of rendering assistance, if necessary, to the end of this unaccountable and violent commotion.

CHAPTER VII.

“HORACE,” said John Cecil, the moment they were in the street; “what is all this? I cannot rest till that rascal has explained himself. What do you think of it all?”

“My dear fellow,” replied Horace, “I confess I am completely puzzled. I cannot believe his statements; yet he repeated them distinctly, notwithstanding the severity of your attack on him, which, even if he spoke the truth, which God grant he may not, he richly deserved for his impertinent behaviour. Do you suppose he will send you a message?”

“Not if he is really engaged to my sister,” answered John Cecil, bitterly; “but I neither know nor care what he does. I wish alone to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the dreaded words he spoke regarding Amy. Is it not strange?”

“Most unaccountable,” answered Horace. “The old man told me aside, he knew something of the matter. We must await his explanations.”

Cecil now recollected for the first time what Horace must have suffered himself during the scene they had witnessed; he remembered with feeling the deep attachment of his friend to Amy, and her mysterious rejection of his hand, and his heart warmed towards him, as arm-in-arm they threaded their way through the crowded streets to their hotel. He did not however allude to the subject of his thoughts, for he perceived clearly that Horace was mortified to the quick, and

judged delicately it would be better to defer any allusion to his sister for the present.

“John,” said Horace, suddenly stopping and turning round so as to face his friend, “there is some deep villany at work. I am convinced of it, and we must be cautious; it is clear to me that your family, like mine, are somehow or other connected with these Fosters. Let us beware; at present, there is no clue to guide us; to-morrow we shall hear what they have to say; your father must then be informed of all that has occurred.

“I cannot help thinking that if my anonymous correspondent had not failed us, we should know more. I cannot define my suspicions, but I see clearly enough that we must be wary, that we are surrounded with enemies who are both skilful and vindictive.”

“I cannot sleep,” said John Cecil, as

they entered the hotel. "Let us smoke a quiet cigar together."

"Certainly," replied Horace ; and having enveloped themselves in their dressing-gowns the two young men sat down before a blazing fire, to con over their adventures, and council one another on the best mode of proceeding for the morrow. They had not been seated ten minutes before a knock at the door disturbed them."

"Who on earth can this be?" said Cecil ; "come in!"

"Sir," said the waiter who entered the room, "there is a poor woman down stairs who asks for Mr. Horace Grantham."

"Indeed," said the latter ; "what does she say?"

"Oh, sir, she just seems half dead with grief and weeping, and asks alone for Mr. Horace Grantham," was the reply.

Horace started from his chair. "Shew

her up stairs instantly," he said; "poor creature! who can it be?"

The waiter left the apartment.

"What new mystery is this?" continued Horace, staring hard at John Cecil; "*recollect it is still the first of November.*"

"Courage, my boy," replied he; "who knows what may yet occur?"

At this moment, steps were heard on the stairs, the door opened, and poor Mrs. Jones, fatigued, and wet to the skin, was ushered into their presence. The appearance of the wretched woman was miserable indeed. She held an old cotton handkerchief to her face, which was swollen with weeping, and low groans broke forth occasionally from her oppressed bosom. Both the young men were immediately touched with pity and commiseration; they approached her respectfully, and begged her to come near the fire and revive herself."

"Thank ye kindly, young gentlemen,"

replied she, moving towards a chair, "I will sit a moment, for I have had a weary walk; but I cannot remain; my time is short;" and the poor woman endeavoured to compose herself to relate the cause of her visit at so unusual an hour.

"Which of ye is Master Horace?" she continued after a pause, during which the spectators, though deeply moved at the grief she displayed, were anxiously awaiting her further communications; "I should know," she went on, with a faint smile scanning the features of the two noble youths who stood upright before her, "for I recollect your poor mother well, Master Horace, and should not mistake you."

"I am he," said our hero, taking her hand kindly, for this allusion to his mother touched his heart.

"Heaven bless you both!" said the poor woman, again overcome with grief, and greatly affected by the sympathy she met

with, "but I am forgetting what I am about, and also that I am a stranger to ye, gentlemen. I ask your pardon."

"Not so, my good woman," said Horace; "can we be of any use to you in your present grief?"

"I fear not, my dear young gentleman," replied she, "though Heaven is merciful. I left my dying husband an hour ago to come in search of you. The doctor says he has not many hours to live."

"His name?" said Horace, quickly.

"Hector Jones," she answered. "He charged me to seek you at the Star Hotel: thither I went, and heard you lived at this house; as my poor husband spoke so grave like about seeing Master Horace, I could not in my heart return without ye, and thank God, that, though faint and weary, I have found ye at last."

"Are you indeed Mrs. Jones," said Horace, "and do I hear that poor Jones is in danger?"

“Alas, Sir, I fear he is going fast; but, Master Horace, you seem to have a kind heart, and will accompany me home, for Hector told me he must see you before he died;” and fresh torrents of grief choked the speaker’s utterance.

“Certainly, my good woman,” said Horace, I will go with you instantly. John, my dear boy, ring the bell and order a hackney-coach, and tell the waiter to bring something warm for Mrs. Jones to drink—poor creature!” he added, aside, “she is in a wretched state, and must be first attended to.”

John Cecil was now all alacrity—he first rang the bell, and then with impatience ran down stairs himself to the bar to mix some hot port wine negus for Mrs. Jones—he met the waiter on his way down—“order a hackney-coach to the door instantly,” he said, “not a moment to be lost, we are about to visit a dying man.”

Thus appealed to, the sleepy waiter roused himself, and quickly went on his mission.

The negus was obtained, and they had the satisfaction of perceiving that Mrs. Jones seemed better after she had drunk it, and bent only on losing no time in returning to her husband.

The coach was soon announced.

"Horace, shall I accompany you?" said John Cecil.

"By all means, my dear fellow, if you will be kind enough," said his friend, "though I fear it is but a melancholy scene we are thus called to."

They now informed the poor woman that the vehicle was ready; wrapped in their great coats, just as the clock struck twelve, they entered it in silence, and ordered the driver to convey them rapidly to the suburbs, where Jones's residence was situated.

It would be impossible to describe the sensations which filled the mind of Horace

as they were thus borne along at midnight, through the now almost deserted streets of Glasgow. The events related had occurred in succession, with such extreme rapidity, that, now seated with his friend opposite Mrs. Jones, who occupied the other part of the crazy vehicle which conveyed them, for the first time he had a moment's leisure for reflection.

The unexpected and extraordinary scene at the merchant's house had, till the moment of poor Mrs. Jones's entrance at the hotel, fully occupied his thoughts, to the exclusion of the summons which had invited him to Scotland; but now, this sudden and pressing call to the death-bed of a man, who he had strong reasons for supposing was the only friend he had in the country, recalled his attention to the anonymous letter, their disappointment in the morning, and lastly to the fact that the day named by the writer had scarcely yet expired. Suddenly

the recollection of the deliberate falsehood Foster had told them regarding poor Jones's journey to London flashed across him. This added to his suspicions, and confirmed his previously formed notions that villany was at work, and that Foster was somehow or other a principal actor in it.

Then his thoughts wandered to the Tyrol, and his loved Amy; strange to say, notwithstanding James Foster's declaration, and apparently confident assertions, regarding her, a weight as if of doubt and uncertainty seemed removed from his own breast; the absolute cause of her rejection of his hand was now apparent; that at least was a step, though accompanied by the inexplicable and fatal intelligence, that she was engaged to another, which engagement was involved in mystery, dark and incomprehensible; yet it seemed to Horace so improbable, so unnatural an idea, that a being like Amy Cecil, lovely, virtuous, innocent,

and intelligent, could really unite her fate with that of a wretch like James Foster, that he alone, from this circumstance, notwithstanding appearances, gathered fresh courage, and permitted the pleasing and divine, though often delusive rays of hope to illumine the dark and mysterious prospects before him.

He was roused from his reverie by the coach stopping short at the entrance of a sort of dark alley; and the coachman intimated to them that they had reached their destination.

“Yes, it is the place,” said Mrs. Jones; “many blessings on ye, Master Horace,” (for the poor woman called him so, from having heard her husband always mention Horace thus,) “for your kindness; I have saved at least an hour by it!

“With your leave, Master Horace, I will step up, and see whether poor Hector is ready to receive you.”

“Just so, Mrs. Jones,” replied Horace. “We can wait in the carriage, and do not hurry yourself on my account. I think only of your husband.”

“God bless you!” murmured the poor woman, and immediately left them in utter darkness.

“John, my dear fellow,” said Horace, “this is a strange, a startling adventure. I feel that the enigma of my fate is about to be solved; and, notwithstanding my sympathy for the poor woman who has just left us, I will allow that the events we have this day witnessed, coupled with our present position, have excited my curiosity, and anxiety for explanations, to a lofty pitch.”

“I am completely bewildered,” replied John Cecil; “do you remember Mr. Foster told us this very morning that Jones was in London?”

“I do,” said Horace, quickly; “depend on it there is some fearful plot, some deep-

laid scheme of villany at work, in which Foster himself is concerned, or why this infamous and apparently unnecessary falsehood?"

"Ah! why indeed?" continued Cecil. "Did this poor man, Jones, know your grandfather?"

"He did," answered Horace, "and was always my friend."

"Is it not possible he may know something of the extraordinary way in which Foster succeeded to his fortune, and the management of his business?" added Cecil, anxiously.

"It may be so," said Horace; "such an idea, since the receipt of the anonymous letter, has often crossed me, yet it seems unlikely that one in his subordinate situation can be well informed."

"Courage!" replied John Cecil; "such things have happened, not often in real life, but it may be so."

"We shall soon know," was Horace's

reply, for I hear steps approaching, no doubt to summon me to poor Jones's side."

Mrs. Jones now appeared at the door of the coach, with a lantern in her hand, and spoke as follows—

"My husband, Master Horace, is quite easy, and wishes to see you instantly."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, my good woman," said Horace. "He may yet recover; John, do you remain here for the present," he continued, jumping on the pavement, "I will not detain you long; at least, you shall soon have a message from me."

The coachman shut the door, and our hero, with careful steps, followed his conductor, who led the way, holding the lantern to guide him, through a dark and dismal court paved with stone—they then commenced the ascent of a winding stair of the same material, passed several landing-places, and at last stopped at a low door on one of

these, high up in the prison-like building which contained them.

She listened for a moment, then gently opened the door, and they stood in the apartment, which was of middle size, though it looked smaller than it really was from the quantity of beds and furniture which were ranged around. On one of these, at the further extremity, lay the dying man. He heard them enter, and essayed to rise from his reclining position, shading the light from his eyes, as if to behold, with all the powers of scrutiny he yet possessed, the new comer.

The effort was too much for him—with a groan he fell back again on the bed, and beckoned his wife to his assistance. She went towards him and supported his head, begging Horace to bring some medicine, which the doctor had desired he was to take occasionally. The phial and glass were on the deal table in the middle of the room.

Horace, deeply affected at the sight he witnessed, obeyed her quickly, poured out the draught, and approached the bed.

“Is that Master Horace?” said the poor fellow, in a weak voice.

“It is,” replied he.

“Thank God!” said the dying man, “He has heard my prayer, merciful praises to His name. Master Horace, give me your hand, for now I feel I shall die in peace.” Horace stretched forth his hand, which poor Jones grasped between both of his, and, with a visible effort, spoke as follows, after drinking the draught presented to him:—

“Mary, my dear wife, my time is short, and I have much to say to dear Master Horace; leave us alone for a while, I pray.”

“I cannot go far from you,” said his tender wife, in broken accents, “but I will wait in the next room till called for.”

“Do so,” said Horace, in a whisper, “depend on me. I feel that he must be obeyed.”

Jones waved his hand impatiently: she understood him, and moving towards a small door, which Horace had not observed, in the wall, she vanished from their presence.

“Master Horace,” said the dying man, as soon as they were alone, “I have not many hours to live; I feel it; and they shall be used, as God, through His mercy, has brought you to me, in telling you many things I unhappily know concerning yourself.”

“Do not over exert yourself, Jones,” said Horace, anxiously.

“It cannot signify,” replied Jones; “that medicine has revived me. I suppose you got a letter I wrote some time ago to you, Master Horace?”

“I received a letter, not signed, summoning me to the Star Hotel, in Glasgow, for this very day,” said Horace, “and I obeyed the call.”

“What!” said Jones, collecting his thoughts. “Is this the day? Yes! Now I recollect, poor Mary told me it was. Heaven be praised!”

“Were you, my poor fellow, the writer of that letter?” asked Horace.

“I was,” replied Jones, “and God forgive me, if I had not been thus smitten with death, I should not have had the courage to speak out and caution you, Master Horace, against one who is a villain; a treacherous villain, and your wicked enemy.”

“Of whom do you speak?” inquired Horace, breathlessly.

“Of old Mr. Foster,” continued Jones, in a steady voice, “who has, by forgery, and cunning plots, robbed you of your inheritance. You may well look amazed, Master Horace, but you can believe the words of a dying man, who has always loved you, and feels now, though it is not too late to do you justice, how sinful he has been to hide the truth so long from you.”

“Have you long known what you now divulge, Jones?” asked Horace.

“I have long suspected that all was not right about your grandfather’s will, Master Horace, for I, when he was ailing, copied out an instrument, which ran much in your favour, but at his death, I, like a weak creature, was afraid to speak my thoughts; thinking he might have destroyed it. That was the first step I wrongly took, Master Horace, and may the Almighty forgive me; but I suffered greatly for it. Well then, I heard the deed read, which conveyed the property and business to old Mr. Foster, and suspected nothing unfair, for I had signed the document myself, and knew that both Mr. Foster and Mr. Macfarlane were also witnesses of it, strange as it appeared.

“You returned to London, Master Horace, and although nothing occurred to re-awaken my suspicions, I could not rest easy till I had told you that I had assisted

in making a will which had never appeared; with this view, I wrote the letter which you received, and told Mr. Foster that I had done so. I suppose he imagined that I knew more than I really did, for I had a terrible scene with him. He raved like a madman, and produced the document we have mentioned, telling me, Master Horace, as God reigns in heaven, that it was all a forgery, and that I was a witness to it, and would be hung if it was discovered; and that both he and his son James would swear I knew it was a forgery. Oh! Master Horace, I have never since that dreadful day had a moment's peace, I suppose because I acted sinfully, and through fear for myself promised Foster I would not meet you, or hint at my knowledge of his crimes."

The poor man was here overcome with his emotions, asking Horace in broken accents for his forgiveness.

"My excellent fellow," said Horace, "you

are not to blame; such terrific villany would have bound anyone to secrecy; and though I believe every word you utter, such horrible conduct is barely comprehensible—can you proceed?”

“Oh! Master Horace, as you forgive me, the Almighty may also for my irresolution; for Foster threatened to arrest me for a debt, and I could not see my poor wife and little ones starve.”

“Dreadful!” said Horace, “can there be such wickedness on earth! I pity you from the bottom of my heart, my poor Jones. What followed?”

“Why, Master Horace, Foster went through the whole transaction, told me he had forged your grandfather’s name to the deed, which the poor gentleman never saw, and I firmly believe, though Foster did not mention it, that he has your grandfather’s will now in his possession.”

“Certainly,” said Horace, “a man capable

of forgery is equally so of *stealing* and *withholding* a will. Do you remember the terms of the document you copied for Mr. Macgregor, Jones?"

"No, Master Horace," replied Jones, faintly, for he was now much exhausted, "I don't; though I recollect it was most favourable to yourself, and I trust it may yet be discovered, when I am beyond the power of the wicked Foster's vengeance, pardoned, I trust, through the merits of my Saviour, for my sins and negligences in this weary world."

"Jones," said Horace, in an encouraging voice, "we all need pardon and forgiveness. Hear me when I say that, as far as I can judge, your conduct has not been wicked, for your intentions have been most honourable throughout, though your actions have been impeded by circumstances, and by a train of the most diabolical and deeply-concocted plots to ensure your silence."

“God bless you for those words, Master Horace,” added the dying man. “I am ready to make my depositions before witnesses to the truth of what I have stated, and there had better be no delay, for I am fast sinking.”

Horace instantly perceived the truth and importance of this last remark. He took Jones’s hand respectfully for a moment, then called Mrs. Jones quietly to the room, and whispered gently that her husband had divulged secrets to him, which he himself wished to be noted down with witnesses immediately.

The poor woman scarcely understood him, but nodded her head in acquiescence, and went towards Jones, who lay with his eyes shut, as if resting from his conversation.

“Remain here till I return,” said Horace, to Mrs Jones, “I shall not be a moment, and do not awake him!”

Horace seized the lantern, and with rapid

steps descended the stone staircase to the street. The coach was there, and John Cecil was walking to and fro on the pavement, for the purpose of keeping himself warm.

“John,” said Horace, in an agitated voice, “it is apparent poor Jones has not long to live. Now I have no time for explanation; but do quickly as I bid you, for much depends upon your alacrity and judgment.”

“Command me anywhere, my dear Horace,” quickly replied his friend. “What is it?”

“Drive instantly, and bribe the man to go with speed, to the house of Mr. Macfarlane the lawyer—for I know of no other, or I would not send for him—bring him here with you, without a moment’s delay; tell him it is of the utmost importance; that Hector Jones, who is dying, wishes to make depositions and confessions before him; and

that, as thousands hang on it, no doubt he will be well paid for his exertions."

"Where does the lawyer reside, Horace?" asked John Cecil.

"I ken weel," broke in the coachman, who, like all of his class, had indulged himself, by listening with avidity to their conversation.

"Do you, my man?" said John Cecil, jumping into the vehicle, and showing the astonished Jarvy a glittering sovereign! "This is yours if you will lose no time on your road. Horace, adieu; depend on my exertions."

"Stop!" said Horace, putting his head in at the window, "bring paper, pens, and ink."

"Yes, yes, I hear," answered Cecil, as the driver mounted his box, and hustled his sorry steeds into first a smart trot, and eventually a gallop over the rough stones,

cheered in spirit by the prospect of being well paid for his long detention, on a dark and miserable night.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUCH an adventure was well suited to the high-spirited and youthful John Cecil. His curiosity had been greatly roused whilst waiting for his friend, and now that he was thus despatched with mysterious haste for a member of the legal profession at midnight, he doubted not that some important disclosures had been made, and that Horace's fortunes were at stake. This consideration alone wound him up to a pitch of high excitement; he frequently looked out, at the least signs of the pace checking,

which was violent enough, and held the sovereign aloft to induce the driver to redouble his efforts. In about twenty minutes, they suddenly pulled up before a large and dreary-looking house; the night-bell was rung, and a man-servant shortly answered the summons.

"I wish to see Mr. Macfarlane instantly, on pressing business," cried John Cecil, "which admits of no delay."

The tones of his voice were quite sufficient to indicate that the speaker was in earnest. The drowsy domestic roused himself; the coachman let down the steps, and Cecil found himself in the lawyer's hall.

"Walk into the dining-room, sir, if you please," said the servant. "I will call Mr. Macfarlane immediately."

"Here is my card," interrupted Cecil; "tell your master he is called to see a dying person!"

"Yes, sir," and the man disappeared to

do his bidding. In an incredibly short space of time, John heard a rustling noise in the passage, and the professional man, wide awake, though with his eyes twinkling, and candle in his hand, wrapped in his dressing-gown, stood before him.

"Your servant, Mr. Cecil," he began, anxiously, for he did not doubt, that he was called from his comfortable bed to attend the last moments of James Foster or Horace Grantham, who, he imagined, had shot at each other by moon, or lamp-light, and that one or the other was mortally wounded!

"Good Heavens! Mr. Cecil, what has happened? which of the poor young men is dead, or killed; ah, these duels! To think we all sat down to dinner together not eight hours ago."

"Mr. Macfarlane," replied John Cecil, "you are mistaken; there has been no duel. Hector Jones, Mr. Foster's clerk, is on the point of death; my friend, Grantham, has

been summoned to attend him ; he has strange disclosures to make, and Horace has despatched me in great haste to request your attendance."

"This is very strange," answered the lawyer, whose fears were somewhat abated by this intelligence.

"It is, indeed," was the reply, "but we have no time to lose; may I entreat you to accompany me without delay?"

"Undoubtedly, Mr. Cecil," said Mr. Macfarlane, for his professional curiosity was now excited; "excuse me a moment; I am not yet dressed."

"We are to bring implements for writing with us," added Cecil.

"That is easily done, and I will not lose a moment; is the poor man past all hopes of recovery?" inquired Macfarlane.

"I fear he is," said Cecil.

In a few minutes, Macfarlane returned. They re-entered the coach, and drove rapidly

to Jones's residence; Cecil, on the way, relating the account of their summons to the man.

"What an eventful day!" cried Macfarlane.

"It is, indeed; or rather, day and night," replied his companion, "for it is now four o'clock in the morning."

They soon arrived, and found Horace at the doorway, anxiously awaiting them.

"The poor fellow is asleep at this instant," he said, "and, though the circumstances are of the greatest importance, I do not feel justified in waking him."

Macfarlane looked more and more bewildered. "What is it all about, Mr. Grantham?" said he. "There is something most extraordinary in the whole affair."

"More than extraordinary," replied Horace. "The dying man has revelations to disclose, which will astonish you beyond description, or I am much mistaken."

“Indeed,” said the man of law, much interested; “let us go to his apartment.”

They proceeded up stairs. Mrs. Jones met them on the landing, and whispered to Horace that her husband was awake, and asked anxiously for him.

“How fortunate!” exclaimed Macfarlane.

Horace entered the room softly, with Mrs. Jones, and at once informed the invalid, that a lawyer and another witness waited without.

“I am very glad of it,” said Jones, in a voice scarcely audible. “Let them come in!”

Mrs. Jones went to the door, and beckoned them to do so.

“Ah!” said poor Jones, as he recognised Mr. Macfarlane, “I am happy one is here who can, in some degree, corroborate my story. Mr. Macfarlane, I am on my death-bed, and now disclose to you a dreadful truth—Mr. Foster is guilty of ‘*forgery*.’”

“What?” said Macfarlane, with astonishment; “impossible!”

“He has confessed it to me himself,” continued Jones. “You remember, sir, the deed, which was produced at the funeral of Mr. Macgregor, and which I signed as a witness in company with the Mr. Fosters, father and son?”

“Good heavens! I do,” replied Macfarlane; “I made out the document myself; though, trusting implicitly to Mr. Foster, I did not, as I ought most certainly to have done, see the deceased gentleman sign it. I can now recollect that Foster told me Mr. Macgregor was ill at his country house, and that he would get the paper signed. I now regret very much my carelessness, but it is past remedy. But how can you prove it is a forgery, Jones?”

“He acknowledged to me that it was one. Whether his son knew it or not, I cannot say,” continued the sick man, “but he

bound me to secrecy by stating that they both could swear I knew it to be a forgery, and would thus suffer with them. But I have another disclosure to make, which, if it is found, will put their guilt beyond a doubt. Mr. Macgregor made a will, which never appeared."

"Ah!" broke in Macfarlane, "where is it?"

"I feel confident it is in Mr. Foster's possession," was the reply. "The forged deed is in the iron safe in the counting-house."

"Immediate search must be made for the will, without delay," said the lawyer, pondering a moment. "Have you nothing further to relate, my good man?"

"Master Horace knows all," answered Jones.

"Sir," interrupted Horace, as the astonished man of business turned from the bed, "Jones has related all the prominent features of the case. I know the rest."

"Good," replied Macfarlane, "but I shall

ake down his statement in writing instantly. If the will is destroyed, the dying man's evidence is, I fear, of small importance. All our chances of success hinge on the will."

"But Jones has made his statement before witnesses, and can be sworn if necessary," said Horace.

"It would all be very easy," continued Macfarlane, "if that poor man recovered, or even survived twenty-four hours."

"The medical man was here not long ago," replied Horace. "I asked his opinion, and he said it was likely he would live some days, as a change for the better, though his case is hopeless, has this evening come over him."

"I trust so," added the lawyer. "It is of the greatest importance. Send your friend for a magistrate immediately. It is necessary he should witness our proceedings, and act as he thinks fit in consequence."

"Cecil, my dear fellow," said Horace, ad-

dressing his friend, "let us go outside, for this conversation disturbs Jones."

They left the room.

"You heard what the lawyer said. Can you kindly undertake to fetch a magistrate as he directed?"

"I am only too happy to be of service," answered Cecil, again descending the stairs, and for the second time entering the coach, he directed the man to drive rapidly to the police-office.

They soon arrived. It was five o'clock, and the light of day was just struggling forth through the darkness of night, rendered still more murky by the dense atmosphere which at all hours envelopes towns like Glasgow.

John Cecil alighted, and inquired as follows, with anxious haste, from a policeman who was on duty:—

"There is no time for delay. A dying man wishes to make depositions before a

magistrate," he said, "pray direct me to one."

The man saw that the case was an important one; and going into an inner room, spoke a moment to some one, then returned, put on his hat, and accompanied Cecil into the street.

"Mr. Steward, an active magistrate, lives close by," said he. "I think he will instantly obey your summons."

"There are five shillings for you, my man," replied John.

"Thank you, Sir," said the official, touching his hat and quickening his steps at the same moment, as he pocketed the cash.

In two minutes, they arrived at Mr. Steward's house. A message was sent up stairs, and the magistrate in a quarter of an hour descended to the dining-room, where they were awaiting his arrival.

"Good morning, Sir, although rather early morning; I confess," said he, smiling,

"but duty must be attended to, and I hear the case is a pressing one."

"Many thanks, Sir," answered John Cecil, "for your prompt attendance; and nothing but the urgency of the matter could excuse my interruption of your slumbers. But the poor man is dying, which alone explains, sufficiently, I trust, my early visit, for which I ask your pardon."

"Not at all," replied Mr. Steward, who was an intelligent-looking active man of fifty. "Pray command me instantly."

"The carriage is at the police-office," continued Cecil. "Let us return thither, if you please."

"Willingly," said the worthy magistrate.

In a quarter of an hour, they pulled up again, at the Jones's abode, during which Cecil related the business, as far as he knew.

They were introduced into the sick room, and found Mr. Macfarlane busily engaged in writing; Horace looking over him. The

depositions were made afresh by poor Jones, who was sworn, and the magistrate's opinion asked, as to the steps to be taken in consequence.

"I think," answered he, "that I am justified in issuing a warrant for the immediate apprehension of the elder Mr. Foster, but it would be well at once to proceed to the counting-house, and take possession of the iron safe. It is possible the will may also be there concealed. At any rate, our business here is over, and the poor man must be left alone."

They quietly rose, and all, except Horace, left the apartment. He approached Jones, and took his hand—

"Jones, my good man," said he, "receive my heartfelt thanks for your conduct. I doubt not that I shall get my rightful fortune, which you have been the means of restoring to me; and, indirectly also, of giving me far greater happiness than its possession alone could afford."

He alluded, though Jones understood it not, to the conviction which now possessed his mind, that James Foster's pretension to Miss Cecil's hand must be resigned.

"I am happy to hear it, Master Horace," answered the sick man. "And now I shall die in peace."

"You will," continued Horace, in a feeling tone. "Depend, my good man, on my promises, which are, that your wife and children shall all, when you are gone, be well cared for, and comfortably settled in life. You have been my friend and benefactor, and it is not only my duty, but will be my greatest happiness, to assist and befriend your family. I must now go, Jones, for it is absolutely necessary that I should do so ; but will soon return."

"Master Horace," replied poor Jones, in a low voice, "you have the blessings of a dying man, whose last hours you have solaced and brightened by your kind promises and encouragement. Mary, dear, always obey

Master Horace, and may God bless him, and all of you—when I am gone !”

He sank back, exhausted. Horace whispered to his wife that he would return as soon as possible, and hastily followed his friends into the street.

The four gentlemen entered the coach, which had proved of such service to them during this eventful night. “Drive by the police-office,” said Mr. Steward; “we must have a chief officer with us to take charge of the iron safe.”

At the office, the officer was obtained. They directed the horses’ heads instantly towards Foster’s counting-house, the door of which had been just unlocked, and an old woman was busied in sweeping and arranging all for the labours of the ensuing day.

Guided by the directions given them by Jones, they had no difficulty in finding the object of their search.

“There it is,” cried John Cecil, who

seemed far more excited than Horace at the sight of the ponderous box, which contained the forged deed, "it will take ten men to move it."

"Ay, sir," said the police-officer, "I must sit on it, or what we call take it in charge, for it can't be moved."

"Yes," said Mr. Steward, "now I will return home and prepare the warrants for the apprehension of the prisoners."

The bustling magistrate started homewards on foot. The police-officer, with cautious gravity, examined the safe all round, and then seated himself comfortably on it, asking the old beldame, who was greatly astonished at this influx of influential visitors at six in the morning, whether she could, by any means, procure him a cup of hot coffee and some bread and butter. She replied in the affirmative, and started on her mission.

"Cecil," whispered Horace to his friend,

“Come here, I wish to speak with you.”

John followed him into the yard, whilst Mr. Macfarlane and the officer entered into an interesting discussion on the case, and the enormity of the rich and respected Mr. Foster's guilt.

“My dear fellow,” said Horace, “I do not wish to revenge myself on the Fosters; I wish they could escape.”

“What, Horace!” cried his friend in astonishment, “they deserve their fate.”

“They do,” said Horace, “but I have peculiar notions on these points. I am resolved, if it be possible, to give them warning, and for that purpose shall proceed instantly to Mr. Foster's residence.”

“Well, do as you like, of course,” replied John Cecil. “Only let us take care what we are about.”

“I shall ask Mr. Macfarlane to accompany us,” continued Horace; “but I shall

say nothing to him of my intention. Neither do you. Just step in and ask him to come out here a moment!" .

Cecil, not accustomed to differ with his friend, at once called the lawyer.

"Mr. Macfarlane," said Horace, "I intend to proceed instantly to have an interview with Mr. Foster, and I wish your attendance professionally."

"Certainly, sir!" replied Mr. Macfarlane, the last words Horace uttered, causing him to avoid remonstrance.

They again entered the coach, and drove rapidly to the mansion which not ten hours previously they had left in discomfort and dismay, crestfallen with the unhappy intelligence of Amy Cecil's engagement, and disgusted beyond measure at the whole scene they had witnessed.

CHAPTER IX.

As Horace Grantham entered the house of a man whom he had known for many years, who had played him false, and robbed him of his own, not hesitating to plunge himself deep into crime for that purpose, it cannot be denied that a natural sense of gratification at now having him in his power possessed his mind; but his noble and generous nature recoiled from the idea of revenge, and whilst he was resolved to be guided entirely by Foster's conduct when accused, as to his mode of action,

he inwardly hoped that the old man might, by a voluntary confession, enable him to give him warning, and thus effect his escape in time.

It was an interesting crisis. Such a scene as the one he was now called to be a principal actor in seldom occurs to a man, and Horace was fully impressed with the gravity of his position, and resolved to act with prudence, though inclined to leniency and pardon. Thus pondering within himself, on his arrival at Mr. Foster's, Horace Grantham, with a determined air, spoke as follows to his companions:—

“I shall seek Mr. Foster in his bed-room, Mr. Macfarlane. Pray wait with Mr. Cecil below. Shew me the way to Mr. Foster's apartment, if you please,” continued he, addressing himself to the astonished butler, who had just risen, and was staring, with open mouth, at Horace and John Cecil,

who had still their evening dress on, the same in which they had dined at his master's house.

"Mr. Foster is in bed, sir," he replied. "I never call him till eight, and it is now only just past six o'clock."

"I am aware of it," said Horace. "I must see your master instantly. You can go before me if you choose. If not, I shall enter his room alone this very moment. It is urgent business, and must be attended to."

"Very well, sir," answered the almost breathless servant. "I will just step in, and say who it is."

"Do so," replied Horace. "I will wait at the door of the bed-room." And they walked up stairs, the domestic leading the way.

Horace's heart beat quickly, as the door of Mr. Foster's sleeping apartment was noiselessly opened—he peeped in—but could

discern nothing. The shutters were closed, and it was dark as night; he heard the heavy breathing of the sleeper in a corner of the room.

Suddenly, a ray of light shot from the window. The curtains had been removed by the man servant, and Horace drew back to await the result.

He heard Mr. Foster turn round in his bed. The butler approached, and thus addressed him :—

“ Sir, if you please. Something strange has occurred. Three of the gentlemen who dined here have called, and Mr. Grantham insists on seeing you instantly.”

“ What do you say, Thomas ?” replied Foster, though his voice was scarcely audible to Horace, who listened anxiously.

“ What o’clock is it, Thomas !”

“ Just past six, sir,” was the reply. “ I would not interrupt you, sir, but Mr. Grantham asks admission to see you instantly.”

“ Six o'clock,” repeated Foster, now fairly awake. “ What is it all about, Thomas?”

“ I know not, sir. The gentlemen have not been in bed! They have still their dinner dress on!”

“ Good heaven, Thomas, there must have been a duel! where is Mr. James?”

“ In his bed-room, fast asleep, sir,” replied Thomas, “ for I have just been there to fetch his clothes.”

“ Ah, what can it be, then?” said the old man.

“ That you shall know instantly, Mr. Foster!” exclaimed Horace, suddenly entering the apartment—his patience fairly exhausted, and anxious that no time should be unnecessarily lost! “ But we must be alone — leave the room!” added he, quickly but decidedly, to the butler.

The man retired.

Horace re-opened the door, to ascertain that no one could overhear them. Satisfied

on this point, he approached the bed, and fixed his eyes firmly on the now livid countenance of the trembling merchant. A long silence ensued. Neither spoke. They gazed on each other ; the guilty man and his accuser.

The former felt that his hour was come, that the blow long withheld was at last about to fall upon his head, and overwhelm him with disgrace and misery. The latter, strong in the possession of proofs, and certain of the guilt of the wretched man before him, contemplated him with feelings of mingled horror and pity ; for a more debased, a more thoroughly crest-fallen and terror-stricken countenance than Foster's, as he sat bolt upright in bed, cannot be conceived.

His limbs seemed paralyzed, the power of speech denied him, as tremblingly he motioned at last to Horace to sit, or speak, or do something to relieve the horrible torture of suspense which devoured him.

“Sir,” said Horace Grantham, speaking slowly, and not removing for a moment his resolute gaze from the old man, “your villany is discovered. You have forged my grandfather’s name, stolen his will, and possessed yourself of my inheritance by fraud. Do not interrupt me,” cried he, waving his hand, as Foster was about to speak, “or you are ruined beyond redemption. I come to save, not slay, if you will be guided by me. I am in possession of the proofs of your guilt. I have been all night with the dying Jones, who has confessed to me; the police are already on your track, and you have but one chance of escape.”

“Ha!” said the wretched man. “All is then discovered?”

“It is,” replied Horace Grantham, “there is no time for delay. Should you wish to save yourself, rise instantly, and do my bidding!”

Foster rose hurriedly, and commenced

putting on his clothes. Convinced of the truth of Horace's statement, the thoughts of escape now filled his worldly brain, and he listened attentively, having in some degree regained his self-possession, to the words which the former, whilst he was thus employed, addressed to him.

"Mr. Foster, I have ample evidence against you; but I do not come to taunt you with your crimes. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.' All I ask is, a full confession on your part before two witnesses who are below, your restitution of the whole of my property, and lastly, that your son, James, signs a paper instantly, giving up all claims to the hand of Miss Cecil, and explains to me the circumstances under which that engagement was forced from the young lady, for of that I am as yet in entire ignorance."

"I can inform you," said the merchant.
"I lent her father £5,000, but would not do

so till she had promised to marry my son, which she did, at the expiration of three years, to save her father from a prison, though he knew nothing of the whole transaction."

"God of heaven!" exclaimed Horace, at once horrified and revived by this extraordinary communication, for in a moment many mysteries were thus made clear to him, and even at this critical juncture, a thrill of joy pervaded him, as he felt he at last knew **Amy's** secret, and the causes of their misfortunes. "What a succession of crime! But do you, Mr. Foster, agree to my conditions? if so, there may yet be time for you to escape."

"Yes, yes," tremblingly replied the merchant, "I commit myself, Mr. Grantham, entirely to your guidance, and thank you for the mercy shown to me."

"Do not thank me, Mr. Foster," said Horace, seriously; "but rather the Al-

mighty, who has sent one to deal with you who, notwithstanding your crimes, and the deep injury you have inflicted on him, wishes you to escape, and use the few years that may yet remain to you, in repentance for the past."

"I am not worthy of your leniency," replied the prostrated and humbled old man.

"We believe in the leniency—the mercy of God," continued Horace; "why should it not be shown to a fellow-creature by a weak mortal like myself? But our time is short—John Cecil, who has also an account to clear with you, and Mr. Macfarlane, the lawyer, wait below."

"Mr. Macfarlane!" cried the wretched Foster. "Must *he*, then, know my wickedness—and must I confess before him?"

"I brought him unwillingly," answered Horace, pained himself as he noticed the alarm depicted in Foster's countenance. "There is no help for it; and he shall be

sent away the moment you have made your confession."

"Let it be so, then," exclaimed the miserable man. "I am ready to accompany you."

They went down stairs, and found the two gentlemen in the dining-room.

Mr. Foster bowed slightly as he entered the room—covered his face with his hands—and sat down in the darkest corner of the apartment.

"Gentlemen," said Horace, "Mr. Foster has acknowledged to me his guilt; and is ready to make depositions before you both as witnesses. Mr. Macfarlane, I will trouble you to take note of his confession in full."

A deep groan burst from Foster at these words. The lawyer took pen and ink, and half an hour was consumed in committing to paper the particulars of the crime, and the full confession of the accused man, who, seeing that his only chance of escape lay in

concealing nothing, made the most ample and satisfactory statement—not omitting a single particular of his infamous conduct.

“Now, Mr. Foster,” said Horace, “you have done all in your power regarding myself. But your son must be sent for, and sign this paper which I have been writing, renouncing all claims to the hand of Miss Cecil. Let him do this, and I will instantly repay you the £5,000 you advanced to Mr. Cecil—and which you have yourself informed me was the price paid for her engagement. Shall I ring and send for Mr. James?”

“Anything you think best,” replied Foster.

Horace did so; and, in ten minutes, that despicable and wicked young man entered the room. He started on perceiving who were its inmates, and seemed impressed with a nervous terror, mingled with curiosity, as he noted the countenance of his father, and business-like occupation of the rest.

“Mr. Foster,” said Horace, “explain to your son the cause of his being sent for here.”

“Spare me!” said the wretched father, in agonized tones. “Mr. Grantham, I pray you to proceed. James, I am a lost and ruined man. Obey your unfortunate parent,—though he, alas! but too truly deserves his fate—and do all Mr. Grantham and Mr. Cecil require, for their mercy is great.”

“How!” said James Foster. “What is the matter?”

“All is discovered, James—the forgery—the will—”

“Where is the will?” interrupted Macfarlane?”

“In the iron safe, with the deed,” said Foster.

“Ha!” said the young man, now partaking of the fears of his father. “Then we are, indeed, undone. But, what have *I* to

do with it? *I* did not forge anybody's name."

"No," said Horace, in a menacing and commanding voice, "but you villanously bound, under circumstances of compulsion, which rendered her acquiescence the only alternative to save her father from a prison, and which act will be an eternal disgrace to your name, a young lady to promise herself in marriage to you. We know everything; the money is repaid to your father, the bond cancelled, and it remains with you to judge whether it will be to your interest to confess all or not, and sign this paper, renouncing all your claims. Gentlemen," added he, "let us leave the Mr. Fosters alone a moment;" for he wished the father to make known to his son his offers of escape.

They retired instantly; and in two minutes were re-admitted.

"The game is up," said James Foster, sullenly taking a pen, and moving towards the table, he signed his name.

Horace seized the paper which released his loved Amy from her engagement. A sense of great joy—of unutterable felicity—penetrated his being. He folded it carefully up, and thus addressed Mr. Foster:—

“Sir, have you any money, notes, or bills in the house, to the amount of 5,000*l*.?”

“I have,” said the criminal.

“Take them; they are yours,” continued Horace. “Mr. Macfarlane, have the goodness to draw up a receipt, and a memorandum of the proceeding.”

The lawyer acquiesced. This done, Horace now was only anxious to get rid of him. He, therefore, said—

“Mr. Macfarlane, there is nothing now to detain you. Are you satisfied with the confessions of both these gentlemen? and is there anything more to perform?”

“No,” replied Macfarlane, putting up his papers; for he never dreamt of the possibility of an escape being either attempted by the guilty men, or winked at by Horace.

"As far as I can judge, nothing further can be done at present. Good morning, Mr. Grantham ! Mr. Cecil, adieu ! I shall see you, no doubt, again shortly."

"Of course, Mr. Macfarlane," replied Horace.

The door had no sooner shut on him than Horace went up to the two culprits, who were conversing together in a low tone in the window, and whispered to them both, "Now go, and sin no more !' May God, as I do, forgive you for the past, and bend your hearts to seek repentance and pardon ! Mr. Cecil and myself will leave the house instantly. Delay not. The police have already information of the accusation against you, and your escape depends entirely on yourselves."

The Fosters essayed to speak, but Horace had already, in company with John Cecil, left the house.

"I fear much," began Horace, "they will be too late ; but I have done all I can. We

are in possession of every necessary proof for the restoration of my property, and I carry now about with me that which is of far more consequence; a thousand times more valuable to me, John, than any fortune, the release of your sister from her detestable engagement."

"Horace, my dear fellow, I congratulate you from my heart on your good fortune," replied John Cecil, offering him his hand, which Horace shook warmly. "It would be affectation in me to pretend not to understand you, so here I say 'Long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Horace Grantham!' May their future happiness compensate them and all of us for the now forgotten past!"

Horace could not but be affected by the honest warmth of the young soldier's speech. He did not reply.

"Just imagine my dear father's surprise, when he gets all the intelligence, Horace," continued John Cecil, "and dear Amy.

Hurrah!" he cried, his natural spirits excited by the good fortune which had thus crowned the labours of the night, "there's a good time coming, boys!" "

"I trust there is, John," replied Horace, smiling at the vivacity of his friend, "but I confess the varied scenes we have played a part in this eventful night, coupled with the loss of our entire rest, have completely knocked me up. Let us go to the hotel, and take a bath and refresh ourselves."

"Not a bad move," answered Cecil; "but I have a proposition to make, and here it is: Let us change our quarters to the 'Star,' in honour and remembrance of its connection with the memorable 1st of November?"

"Oh, by all means!" replied Horace. They bent their steps thither—sent for their luggage—and, having taken a warm bath, sat down to breakfast somewhat invigorated.

"I must go instantly and see poor Jones, and inform him of what has happened, as,

of course, we shall soon hear whether the Fosters have effected their escape," said Horace.

"Well," answered Cecil, "I will remain here, in case any one calls with intelligence, or on any business."

"It is very necessary you should do so, John," continued his friend, rising, and putting on his hat and coat. "I will walk—it will do me good."

They separated thus. Horace, during his walk, endeavoured to arrange his ideas, greatly confused by the incidents of the last twenty-four hours. One thought, however,—one blessed thought—did, and would, notwithstanding his endeavour to give the rest some portion of his attention, rise uppermost—*Amy Cecil was free!* He knew he possessed her love. Now, he also felt confident of her hand. This happy conviction shed a joyous serenity over the otherwise agitated surface of his contem-

plations, which necessarily included the sad picture of poor Jones's death-bed—the seizing of the iron safe—and, lastly, the painful and exciting scene with Foster and his son.

In half an hour, he arrived at his destination, and quietly ascended the stairs. He was too late—a change for the worse had come over Jones not long after their departure. The doctor and the clergyman had both been in attendance; and the poor man, half an hour previously, had breathed his last in their presence, and in that of his wife and elder children, who had been sent for.

Horace Grantham knew that grief is sacred; and, moreover, that it must have its way unchecked, before the survivors can find relief, even from words of sympathy or acts of kindness; he, therefore, only waited a moment—gave poor Mrs. Jones his card, with his address written on it, and sorrowfully returned towards the hotel,

deeply regretting the death of a man who, though weak and irresolute, had many virtues and sterling qualities; and who, moreover, had stood his friend and wished him well, under circumstances when all had turned against him, and Fortune frowned with ill omen on his now bright career.

On arrival at the Star, Horace found his friend still alone, but they had not been many moments in conversation, before the waiter announced a visitor, and Mr. Steward, the magistrate, accompanied by a police-officer, entered the apartment.

"I have bad news for you, gentlemen," he began, "the prisoners, or rather, the Fosters, whom we wished to make our prisoners, have absconded!"

"They cannot be far off yet," said the officer, "and I think it impossible they can escape us, my men are all on the alert: but it is very unfortunate."

"Well, it cannot be helped," answered Ho-

race. "I conclude every exertion will be made, and no expense spared."

"Depend on it, Mr. Grantham," said Mr. Steward, "and I am happy to be able to inform you, that the very fact of their flight is, in reality, an acknowledgment of their guilt, and that thus, there will, I trust, be no difficulty in regaining your rights. I have received permission from the authorities to break open the iron safe, and trust that fresh evidence may be there discovered."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Horace, "shall I accompany you?"

"I think you had better, Mr. Grantham," was the reply.

The whole party started together; the safe was opened in their presence; and, to Horace's joy, though not astonishment, for he knew from Foster they would there be found, both the forged deed and his late grandfather's will were brought to light, and consigned to the

care of the proper authorities for further examination.

Horace now became alarmed lest the fact of their recent visit to Foster's abode should be discovered. He, therefore, after a consultation with Cecil, thought it best at once to see Mr. Macfaclane, and bind him to secrecy, as, now that the culprits were off, no good could ensue by any further statements regarding them.

With this view, he went to the lawyer's house, and found him busily engaged in writing.

"The Fosters have made their escape," said he, sitting down.

"Indeed!" ejaculated Macfarlane. "Is Jones dead?"

"He is," continued Horace, "but the will and the deed have both been discovered."

"Well," added the lawyer, "the escape of the Fosters, though it will defeat the ends

of justice regarding their punishment, cannot in any way influence your claims, for I have just run out here a compendium of the evidence, which is full and satisfactory, whilst the fact of the Fosters having absconded, is a proof of their guilt."

"I reckoned on this, Mr. Macfarlane," said Horace, "and I now beg of you as a private friend to listen, and to acquiesce with my request on the occasion. I visited the Fosters for two purposes, firstly, that a full confession might be obtained (if indeed it is necessary to produce it, after what has occurred,) before yourself, and secondly that they might, by being put on their guard, attempt to escape. You may think this strange, and perhaps it is so, but I have no wish to carry my revenge further, and I hope they will get off. On the other hand I request you, as a mark of friendship to me, not to divulge what you have heard, nor, unless it is impossible to substantiate my

claims without it, allude in any way, to anybody, publicly or privately, to the interview with them, which yourself, and John Cecil, were alone the witnesses of—”

The lawyer paused; for this statement, though he half expected it, was of an extraordinary nature, and required consideration. Macfarlane was what is vulgarly called “*in a fix*,” himself, because it would no doubt come out on a trial, if one took place, that he had greatly neglected his duty in not having seen the late Mr. Macgregor sign the deed himself, which, our readers may recollect, he had not done, but trusted to Foster’s probity on the occasion. This reflection had annoyed him considerably, and he now remembered that if no trial took place, the document in question, though it necessarily must be examined, would not be so in a public manner, and that therefore his neglect might escape general observation.

Professionally, this was of great importance to him; the evidence was ample, and the restitution of Horace certain; consequently, all things considered, the escape was to him rather favourable than otherwise, and he soon determined to agree to Mr. Grantham's proposal, as, even if the interview did come to light, it could only amount to a charge of being too hasty, and thus giving the accused an unnecessary warning of their dangerous position.

"It will be better, Mr. Grantham, to do as you propose," he answered, "and say nothing about our visit to the Fosters. No harm can accrue, that I see."

"I think not," replied Horace, who at once perceived that they understood each other. "All that now remains is for you to take immediately the necessary steps to investigate the affairs of Mr. Foster, and to put me in possession of the statements, and the probable amount of the fortune I shall inherit."

“No one is better qualified than myself to do so,” answered Macfarlane, “I was Mr. Foster’s legal adviser, and am perfectly conversant with his pecuniary affairs, the state of the business, and the proceeds from it; and I am most happy to be able to inform you that the annual income derived from it is very large, averaging from between ten to fifteen thousand a year. All this is yours, though the arrangement of the private funds and personal property of Foster will require a strict investigation, and, no doubt, be attended with some difficulty. Much will depend, also, on the terms of the will, which has not yet been examined.”

“Of course,” replied Horace, “I leave this entirely to your care, and shall depart for London, placing full confidence in your judgment and discretion.”

“Which shall not be misplaced, Mr. Grantham,” added the lawyer, much pleased with

the result of their interview. "There is nothing to detain you, unless, indeed, the criminals should be apprehended. Foster may have carried off more money than the £5,000 you authorized him to do."

"He may," continued Horace, with a smile, "but if he has, he is welcome to it. What remains is amply sufficient to satisfy me."

"You are most generous, Mr. Grantham," was the reply.

"I shall see you again, before we leave, Mr. Macfarlane," said Horace, rising to depart.

"Certainly," answered Macfarlane. "Good morning, sir; I congratulate you heartily on your position."

"Thank you," replied Horace. "Now adieu; I shall only wait to attend Jones's funeral, and then be off."

With these words, the gentlemen separated, and Horace returned to the Star Hotel,

where he found Cecil, communicated the result of his visit, and they sat down to write their adventures, which were speedily finished, and dispatched to Mr. Grantham, in London, and to Cecil's relations in the Tyrol.

The day following, they attended the remains of poor Jones to their last resting-place. Horace gave a sum of money to the widow, recommended her to the notice of Macfarlane, who supplied him liberally with cash ; and the night after they started for London, Horace, elated and joyous at his altered fortunes, accompanied as they were with the blissful hope of his approaching marriage to Amy, and John Cecil, wild with delight at his friend's success, and probable alliance with his own family.

The elder Mr. Grantham had received the intelligence of all that had occurred with unfeigned astonishment. Mrs. Grantham was much pleased, and they welcomed the

young men on their return with congratulations loud, hearty, and sincere ; though it must be confessed that Horace's father, not accustomed to investigate the motives of his actions closely, was surprised with himself, when he found how differently he regarded his son, as the possessor of thousands, to what he had done previously.

Many will say, this is "human nature." Granted—but it is bad "human nature," unworthy of imitation, selfish, and despicable ; for the man whose regards are influenced by the worldly position of his son, or even of a friend, cannot be said to be either fulfilling his duties as a father, or to be the possessor of those qualities of probity and honour, or those feelings of charity, self-respect, and benevolence, which are the basis of a virtuous and noble character.

Horace, and John Cecil, took lodgings together. The latter was busily employed in his preparations for joining the Corps to

which he had been appointed. The former had, although considerably bothered by constant official despatches from Macfarlane and Co., in Glasgow, which required his attention, more time for reflection, and looked forward with increasing anxiety every day for the arrival of the mails from Austria.

Horace had requested John Cecil not to mention anything regarding his sister to Mr. Grantham till he had obtained her consent, and her father's also, to their marriage. Mrs. Grantham, with whom the gay and dashing John Cecil was an especial favourite, had penetrated the secret; and, although she could get no decisive answer from the young officer, she saw pretty clearly how things stood, and was very anxious to know all about his sister, and the family.

CHAPTER X.

SINCE the departure of Horace Grantham and her brother, Amy Cecil, though supported by a sense of right and the kind sympathy of Madame Le Clerc, had been truly miserable. It was only when Horace was really gone, that she knew the full extent of the sacrifice she had made, or how deeply she loved him.

She relapsed into a state of deep melancholy, struggling with all her powers against the fatal influences of the passion, which threatened, to the regret of her father, who

watched her with unceasing solicitude, both to obtain a complete mastery over her mind, and seriously to affect her bodily health.

Mr. Cecil became alarmed; he tried in vain to ascertain from the old lady the cause of his daughter's conduct, which, as he reflected, seemed only the more strange and unaccountable.

Amy, he observed, shunned his society, though evidently not from want of affection, for he had once or twice caught her, when she fancied herself unobserved, gazing at him with a mournful expression, mysterious, though full of tenderness and love.

At such periods, Mr. Cecil longed to embrace his child, and entreat her confidence; but he recollected his promise to her not again to allude to Horace, and therefore could do nothing but hope for the best, and trust that the time was not far distant, when the causes of all this concealment and unhappiness would be brought to light.

Amy Cecil indeed suffered pangs of tor-

ture for many days. She gave way in solitude to her grief unchecked ; a choking sensation, in her throat, caused by suppressed agitation and mental agony, impeded her utterance : silently she sat by day, alone with her load of grief—gasping, as it were, for air, seeking consolation and finding none ; by night, more composed, though equally miserable, she indulged, gazing on the stars, in reminiscences of the past, and, giving full play to her romantic and passionate temperament, invested her lover, whose form and features were indelibly fixed in her remembrance, with almost God-like attributes.

She did not reflect upon her past life : the present was far too momentous a period for such meditations, and the future, though dark, was yet, when she allowed herself to hope, incomparably preferable to the recollections connected with her visit to Scotland, and its fatal consequences.

The conviction (the blessed certainty of

which was her only solace, and which infused a sense of mournful happiness through her otherwise melancholy reflections,) that Horace loved her to distraction, was not sufficient to quell the misery she underwent; for the thought was accompanied with the certain knowledge of the present hopelessness of her position, and her lone hours were spent in vain comparisons of what might have been, and that which actually was, which only tended to increase her disappointment, and add fuel to the flame that threatened entirely to consume her. This could not last; her health gave way rapidly, and both her father and Madame Le Clerc had the mortification to witness her daily increasing debility, and wretched state, without the power of in any way removing her sorrows, or alleviating her distress.

Madame Le Clerc judged wisely that, in her present state, it would be fruitless to interfere; for any allusion, however slight,

to the past, on her part, was met by the unfortunate girl with such heart-rending outpourings of grief—such unmistakeable signs of fearful agony, that she was forced to abstain, and hastily change a subject fraught to Amy Cecil with such unspeakable misery, that the very mention of Horace's name by another shook her soul to the very centre, and rendered her an object at once of deep interest and earnest commiseration to the beholder.

John Cecil had written from London, giving a slight account of their hurried journey and interview with Horace's father; adding, that they were to start for Scotland that very evening.

Poor Amy knew of the mysterious summons to Glasgow; and, of course, was greatly interested on Horace's account in the result—though it could not, in any way, alter her position regarding him.

Still, anything connected with her lover

was sacred to her; and she plucked up courage, on the afternoon of the day the letter arrived, to ask her father what he thought of so strange an affair.

“Indeed, my love,” replied he, “I am at a loss to understand it; but, as Horace could lose nothing by obeying the urgent call of his anonymous friend, I deemed it right to advise him to proceed to Glasgow; for there was something to me so unlikely in the manner of his grandfather’s bequests, and the whole proceeding by which his partner inherited his wealth and business, that I cannot but imagine there may be something more than we suspect revealed by the writer.”

Amy changed the subject; and, from that time forward, made no further allusion to it, endeavouring to conceal from her father and Madame Le Clerc the fearful ravages which incessant grief was making on her debilitated frame, but in vain; for, not

many days afterwards, Mr. Cecil, whose fears were now aroused to the highest degree, called on Madame Le Clerc, and in words of deep anguish, imparted to his friend his fears and anxiety regarding her.

Madame Le Clerc had, indeed, a difficult part to play. Though resolved that, sooner than see her darling Amy sacrificed, she would, eventually, obtain the consent of the latter to inform Mr. Cecil of the whole transaction, it was impossible for her to do so at present without her leave; and her position was the more awkward, because she was aware that, although she possessed the key which could explain, if not remedy, the sorrows of poor Amy, she was rendered, owing to the peculiarity of the circumstances, quite powerless; and, on the other hand, sympathized deeply with Mr. Cecil in his natural distress.

Amy spent much of her time alone, and made vigorous efforts, by constant occupa-

tion, to turn her thoughts from herself. Books, music, and drawing, were all tried by turns, but all in vain ; the work, however interesting, or the pencil, however happy the efforts of the hand that guided it, would fall from her grasp, and she would sit for hours wrapt in a gloomy reverie, from which she was only roused by some one approaching her, or any other outward noise that attracted her attention.

The past was like a dream to her ; the future she dared not scan, and though hope could not be said to be entirely dead within, (for when does hope leave the wretched and forlorn?) the spark was faint and cheerless, whilst the sad realities of her life were but too apparent, and her chances of emancipation most limited.

Some ten days after the receipt of her brother's first letter by Mr. Cecil, Amy was seated alone, one clear, frosty morning, in their pretty drawing-room. The sun shone ma-

jestically, and, though winter had set in, the trees had scarcely as yet lost their foliage, tinged with the beautiful hues of autumn. It was the sort of day on which the spirit, however bowed down by grief, acknowledges the magic power of the glories of Creation; and poor Amy, though unknowingly, felt its influence, and had seated herself at the piano for practice, in a more composed frame of mind than she had enjoyed since Horace's departure.

The door opened suddenly, and her father entered the apartment. She looked up; he held a letter in his hand. His countenance was agitated, though an expression of joy, mixed with anxiety, lit up his animated features. He stopped short, and held out his arms to his child, who, at once divining that something unusual had occurred, sprang to his embrace, and he strained her to his heart with more, far more, than his usual tenderness and love.

"My beloved child, my own Amy," at last said he, though he could hardly speak for agitation, "the time for concealment is past! Forgive me, my love, forgive your father for his blindness and dulness of perception. I know all; and, thank God, am the bearer of joyful tidings."

Amy heard these words, but could not collect herself to understand them. A sense of relief, indeed, immediately possessed her, for her father's tones were cheerful, and what he had said was most encouraging. She kissed him, and awaited his further speech.

"Here, darling," continued he, "is a long letter from John, dated Glasgow, Nov. 2nd. They have dined at Mr. Foster's."

"*Where?*" said Amy, more bewildered than ever.

"With those infamous Fosters, my child, father and son, whom you recollect, and know far more intimately than I ever sus-

pected," answered he, as the tears forced themselves into his eyes. "God bless you, my dear child! He will reward you for your devotion to your parent, who now blames himself that he did not see through the villany of the plot against your everlasting peace, and guard you better than he has done against the misfortunes which might have ensued!"

"Say not so," replied Amy Cecil; "I find, dearest papa, that you have somehow obtained a knowledge of my secret. How could I have acted otherwise?"

This beautiful appeal—this spontaneous burst of pure and natural affection, which could alone have been dictated by an unselfish and noble nature, completely overcame the gratified and fond parent. For what father could fail to be proud of a daughter who had thus proved herself devoted to him beyond description; who was willing, and had in fact, as far as she knew to the

contrary, sacrificed herself and her whole chances of happiness to save him from misery and disgrace ?

Mr. Cecil turned away to the window to conceal his emotion. Amy could not speak ; so that, for a few moments, they both employed themselves in endeavours to conquer their feelings, and compose themselves for the coming explanations.

“My child !” exclaimed Mr. Cecil, turning round, in a firm voice, and looking directly at Amy, “before I speak another word, receive your father’s heartfelt thanks. But no ; God knows, I can never say what I really feel towards you, my darling, for this magnanimous—this wonderful instance of your love and affection. Understand me, though, Amy. I know it all at last—how you bound yourself to marry that low-bred ruffian, to save me, or to get me money, which you did me the justice, my child, to feel I never would have touched a penny of,

had I known the price at which it was borrowed.

“Oh, detestable villany! impious fraud! Thanks, grateful thanks, to the merciful Dispenser of eternal justice, that He has permitted the fearful plot to be brought to light, and moreover that the discovery, dearest, is happily accompanied with the joyful news of your perfect liberation!”

Amy Cecil, while he spoke, seemed like one turned into stone. Her face was deadly pale, and her eyes were fixed on her father, her lips apart, and her countenance rigid. She grasped tightly the back of the chair, on which she leant for support, though motionless as a statue. His last words were incomprehensible, but a matter of life and death almost to her.

“Liberated from what, my father?” she uttered in a low, hollow voice.

“From your engagement with Foster, darling,” was the reply, “and you are now

free, Heaven be praised, to give your hand to Horace Gran—”

The words were not past his lips, when Mr. Cecil, to his dismay, saw his daughter shut her eyes, reel, as if for support, and fall heavily on the floor.

The re-action had been too much for her. Concentrating all her faculties, all her aspirations, all the instincts of her head and heart, on her father's speech and reply, the lovely girl had overstrained the powers of nature, and sank to the earth in a death-like swoon.

Her father was at her side in an instant. He rang the bell, which was close by, violently. Madame Le Clerc, who was in the garden, heard the confusion, and quickly entered the room. Restoratives were produced, and, after a time, Amy Cecil opened her eyes, and fixed them on her father, who held her by the hand, gazing anxiously on her countenance.

“She is better now, Madame Le Clerc,” said he, calmly. “It was my fault; I ought to have been more careful. Dear girl—may God yet reward her, and grant her happiness !”

“Ah ! sir,” answered the old lady, “she does indeed deserve it. How do you feel now, dear Amy ?”

“Very well, indeed,” replied our heroine. “I shall get well now, dear papa,” continued she, looking at her father with an angelic smile.

“Yes, dear, you shall,” said he, “and, by way of commencing the cure, let me carry you to the sofa.”

He took her in his arms, and placed her on the canopy. She seemed soon quite composed, though still very pale.

“I will go and get you a glass of wine, my love,” said Madame Le Clerc.

“I should like it,” replied Amy; “it will me good.” The old lady left the room.

The instant she was gone, Amy caught her father's glance, and beckoned him to her. He bent down his head. She whispered softly in his ear—

“Dear papa, have you nothing for me?”

“To be sure I have, my darling; here it is! A letter from Horace,” he replied, producing one and giving it to her, which she took and buried in her breast with a sort of convulsive quivering of her whole frame.

“Leave me, dear papa,” said she in a low voice; “leave me alone.”

Her father saw she must be obeyed.

“Yes, dear, you can ring, or call, if you want me. I will listen in the garden till you do so. Good bye.” Amy Cecil was then left to herself.

“Merciful heavens,” thought she, as she took the letter of her lover from her dress, “what a weight is removed from my aching and weary brain!”

She kissed and tore the letter open; the first

words she saw causing the tears to rush from her eyes, and greatly to relieve her oppressed and bursting heart. Horace wrote thus to her :—

“EVER DEAREST AMY,—Rejoice with me, my own love ! Yes, now indeed, my own. My heart tells me this, though many hundred miles divide us ; the convictions of my spirit cannot now deceive me. When you read this, my adored Amy, banish for ever the past from your remembrance, and look forward to the future with confidence.

“He who loves you with his whole soul, and whose only thought now is to be quickly at your side, tells you this. Oh ! Amy, best beloved, when I compare the feelings with which I took my sad and solemn farewell of you at the wicket-gate, to those which *now* possess me, I wonder at the almost miraculous events which have occurred, and so happily and suddenly changed our dark and mysterious destiny into one bright and endless scene of interminable happiness.

“ I refer you to your father for particulars, for I feel that I cannot pollute writing which your loved eyes will scan, by an account of our adventures, connected as they are with one, whose villany has been almost the cause of severing our fate, but who has, with his unprincipled father, met his just reward in time. Amy, my own love, I know all, everything ; I know the causes of your refusal ; and now that it is all over, and Heaven has granted me the incalculable boon of your love and hand—for I can now claim it with a full confidence of the reward I seek—I do not regret the past, excepting the misery which it has entailed upon us both ; for has it not, Amy, whilst the enigma is solved, acquainted me with the motives which dictated your conduct, and given me fresh cause to admire and reverence your character, though nothing could, or can, increase my unbounded love towards you ? Therefore, I say, dearest, look up, raise your

spirit from the dull earth, and join your aspirations with mine in prayers of gratitude and joy to heaven for the blessings vouchsafed to us; for *happiness*—great *happiness*—is yet in *store for us*; not ‘misery,’ ‘great misery,’ as once you expressed yourself at a never-to-be-forgotten scene to me. I cannot be said to live whilst apart from you, for my soul, my existence, my real self is always with you, though fate divides our bodies for a time. This time shall be short, Amy, my heart bounds with anxiety, the blood rushes wildly through my frame, when I picture to myself our joyful meeting, never to part, to share together the pleasures, the toils, the duties of our future life, which on my part shall be devoted, my everlasting love, with unceasing solicitude, to heal the wounds which misfortune has inflicted, and give daily proofs of my deep and ardent affection for you. Till then, I write the word, adieu. Heaven shield my love till

we meet, is the daily prayer and hourly thought of yours for ever,

“HORACE GRANTHAM.”

Amy read once, and then again—after which she drew a long, deep sigh, a sigh such as lovers only know, and threw her head back on the sofa for rest. She shut her eyes, and remained in that position, almost motionless, for a long hour, during which her thoughts, though confused, were full of joy and bliss, that almost baffled her comprehension, so sudden, so totally unexpected, were the communications she had received and read. That it was no dream, the letter in her hand was sufficient evidence, but that all their misery, the death-like reflections of the past, should be thus wiped away, and remain only as a dark vision occasionally to haunt the memory, was almost more than she could believe or understand.

Oh, happy girl, let us leave thee to fathom

by degrees thy destiny, and to enjoy those delicious moments that come but once in our sublunary existence, that from their very nature, being the essence of the most highly-wrought and almost delirious mental gratification, cannot last, but, while they do, give us a foretaste of heaven, of the divine nature of love, and a faint idea of what it might be, were not our spirits clogged by contact with the vile clay of which we are formed, and which daily, nay hourly, reminds us of our actual state, in this sphere below.

Mr. Cecil had retired, with Madame Le Clerc, whom he had met on his way out with a glass of wine for Amy, and stopped her entrance, to the garden. He there produced his son's letter, which we will transcribe for the benefit of our readers, as he perused it to the old lady:—

“The Star Hotel, Glasgow, Nov. 2nd.

“My Dear Father,—Success! success!

grand success ! In fact, I announce so much good fortune, that I am puzzled where to begin, and have not time, as we are much engaged, to enter into all the particulars. We were disappointed in our interview at the given time, were invited to dine with a man, called Foster, whom I find you knew when you lived in Scotland. He is also the late partner of Mr. Macgregor, Horace's grandfather, and the very man who succeeded to his property.

“At dinner, his son, a low ruffian, whom you have seen, and poor dear Amy knows well, it appears, (for the father only advanced you the £5,000, on condition that she promised in three years to marry his son,) got intoxicated, and, to my horror, actually toasted my dear sister as his future bride. I seized the rascal, and was about to half kill him, when I was stopped by the company ; he stuck to his story, and dismayed by the intelligence, we departed, to

call the next day for further explanations. Now comes the most extraordinary part of my tale. Before midnight, we were summoned to the dying bed of a poor man, called Jones, the late Mr. Macgregor's clerk, and Foster's present one; he divulged a dark plot, and the fearful crimes of the Fosters, who are guilty of forgery, and also of concealing the late Mr. Macgregor's will, which has been found, and there is no doubt that Horace will get the whole of the property; for the will bequeaths it to him as sole heir.

“We took legal advice instantly. The forged deed and will were secured, and the Fosters were on the point of arrest, when Horace—who wished to give them a chance of escape, provided a full confession were made—accompanied by myself, and Mr. Macfarlane, a lawyer—though he did not tell the latter of his intention—proceeded to their abode, dragged the old man from

his bed, who, sinking with shame, and seeing that his infamy was discovered, acknowledged the entire truth of the charges against him, and cried aloud for mercy.

“Macfarlane now departed for further assistance and advice.

“‘Mercy! Yes,’ said Horace, ‘mercy, as far as I can grant, you shall have on one condition.’

“‘Name it,’ said the miserable wretch.

“‘That you restore the whole of the property, and that your son, in writing, instantly renounces all claim to the hand of Miss Cecil,’ was the reply.

“He willingly acquiesced. James Foster was sent for, the paper signed, a full confession was written by the old man, with trembling hands; which done, I heard Horace whisper in his ear, ‘Now go and sin no more!’

“We left the house instantly, and, on the officers of justice searching it some hours

afterwards, the birds were flown, and no traces of them have been as yet discovered.

“ Horace hopes they have escaped to America, and has no doubt he shall eventually hear from them. The evidence, coupled with the confession and the production of the lost will, is amply sufficient to place him in possession of an enormous fortune; the son confessed his villany regarding my dear sister; she is free; and Horace allowed the father to carry off bank-notes to the amount of £5,000, which sum pays off the debt you owed him. This noble generosity apparently had some effect on the unhappy man, for he asked for forgiveness, and acknowledged his crimes in full.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said Horace, ‘ it is a debt of honour. I repay you for Mr. Cecil,—say no more.’ ”

“ We are now employed in legal business connected with Horace’s affairs. All goes smoothly, and it only remains for me to congratulate, first, my darling sister, which

I do with a loving kiss, and then, yourself, my dear father, on the happy turn things have taken. As for Horace, it would do you good to see him—he is another man, and is now employed, with my full consent, knowing as I do that you will have no objection, in writing to Amy; and, to judge by his countenance, the occupation is by no means unpleasing to him. There, now you have the first despatch of Ensign Cecil, and a very satisfactory one it is, you must allow, in all points. Adieu! my dear father; Horace wishes to know whether there is any impediment *now* to his returning with me to the Tyrol—ahem! Pray direct to London in reply. We only wait to attend poor Jones's funeral, which takes place the day after to-morrow. My love to Madame Le Clerc.

“Ever your most affectionate son,

“JOHN CECIL.”

Extraordinary news, certainly," said the old lady, with a meaning smile, as Mr. Cecil ceased reading.

"You do not seem half so astonished as I expected, madame," replied her friend.

"No, my dear sir," she answered. "I am more gratified than astonished, for dear Amy has made me her confidante for some time, and I knew of her engagement, and the causes of her refusal of Horace Grantham."

"Did you, indeed?" exclaimed Mr. Cecil, half angrily. "Then how am I to forgive you, Madame Le Clerc, for concealing such a grave circumstance from me so long?"

"Because the dear girl only related her story to me under a promise of strict secrecy, though, believe me, Mr. Cecil, if matters had proceeded to extremity, I would, at all hazards, have informed you of the features of the case sufficiently to have excited your

suspicious, and if possible remedy the evil," answered Madame Le Clerc.

"Thank you, my dear friend, I now see it all," replied he, shaking the old lady's hand with warmth. "What an escape we have all had, and what a devoted daughter I possess, Madame!"

"You do, indeed, Mr. Cecil," said Madame Le Clerc, "in a long life I have never met her equal. Her attachment to Horace Grantham is no ordinary one. I have witnessed her dreadful struggle betwixt love and duty, between her ardent passion for that excellent young man, and her determination to sacrifice herself for her father's benefit; and, believe me, a character more exalted, or a heart more noble, does not beat in woman's breast. But tell me, Mr. Cecil; had you no suspicion of the truth?"

"None whatever, I assure you, my dear Madame," was the reply; "we saw so very little of the Fosters, and my mind was so

unhinged, when in Scotland, by the state of my pecuniary matters, that everything escaped my observation. But what strange disclosures, what villanous plots! And how extraordinary that Horace Grantham should be thus connected with the Fosters!"

"It is strange, certainly, that you should not have discovered that from Horace," said she.

"He told me his story, but never mentioned the name of his late grandfather's partner, or I might have at least suspected it was the same Foster who lent me the £5,000, which Horace has so nobly repaid him," answered Mr. Cecil.

"I suppose," continued the old lady, whose countenance indicated great delight at all this happy news, "Mr. Grantham is now a very wealthy man."

"It would appear so, Madame. But we must not be too sanguine. 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,'" said he.

"Nothing further can be done till we hear again from London. No doubt Horace has made everything pretty clear to Amy."

"Not so, my dear sir," replied Madame Le Clerc, "take my word for it, that love, and love alone, is the subject of the letter. I will stake the penetration of a woman, though an old one, that I am correct."

"Bravo!" cried Mr. Cecil, laughing. "I shall now return to my child; for she has been at least an hour alone."

He rose, and left the garden, entered the drawing-room, and discovered Amy, with her handkerchief spread over her face, in the position in which our readers left her. She removed it, as her father entered, and met his glance with a smile, indicative of happiness, of a sense of relief from painful suspense and misery.

"You are now better, dearest," said her father, approaching her.

"Yes, dear papa," she replied, in a sweet

voice, "all is happiness, but I cannot now speak of the past, for my heart is too full almost for utterance."

"Heaven reward, and bless you, my child!" added Mr. Cecil, kissing her. "Do you feel able to take a drive this beautiful day?"

"It would do me more good than anything, dear papa," she answered, rising.

"I will order the drosky, then," said he, leaving the room.

"I shall be ready in ten minutes," was the reply, and she went up stairs to put on her bonnet, and safely conceal Horace's first and welcome letter in the recesses of her writing-desk.

Horace had written also a short note to Mr. Cecil, requesting his daughter's hand in form, and referring him to John Cecil's letter for explanations.

These were all of a satisfactory nature. He knew Amy loved Horace deeply; he

himself not only had a deep regard for him, but admired his character and his principles; and he was now of that age when he felt he could confide his only daughter to his charge with a just hope of her future happiness being safely secured. In a few days, therefore, he announced to Amy, whose health and spirits were hourly improving, whilst the cheerful smiles of content, the bright rays of hope again pervaded her lovely countenance, his intention of proceeding at once to England.

“My darling child,” said he, “there is nothing to detain us here—nor is it worth while to bring John and Horace back only to return. I did not tell you that I have received a short letter from him, asking your hand in marriage. My dearest daughter, you have my full consent to act as you please, and I think we all know how that will be.”

Amy blushed, but laughingly replied,

“Dear papa, I shall keep you all in sus-

pense, though it is hardly fair to do so, after causing you such anxiety about my poor self. I shall enjoy our journey to England much."

"Have I your permission, papa, to write to Horace?"

"Undoubtedly, my dear," he replied, "and, when your letter is ready, I will give you one to enclose to John from me, and I think I had better write a line to Horace's father, with whom I am slightly acquainted."

"What sort of a person is he, dear papa?" asked Amy.

"A very different man from his son," replied her father, "but I really know not enough of him to give a decided opinion. However, darling, I do not think it likely he will trouble you and Horace much—you will be entirely independent of him; and, consequently, will, no doubt, be on excellent terms."

Now, all was bustle and excitement in

the cottages; Madame Le Clerc heard with pain of the determination of her friends, though she was comforted by Amy's whispering in her ear, the day before they commenced their journey,

"I shall make a certain person, who is very rich, dear Madame Le Clerc, buy the cottage we are now leaving, so that you will soon see us all again."

"What a delightful idea, my dear child!" replied the gratified old lady, for she felt the compliment was meant for herself; and was, besides, so fond of the whole family, that the hope of constantly seeing them there again filled her with delight, and reconciled her to their present departure, which took place about the beginning of December.

The weather was cold, but clear and frosty; the sun favoured them during the whole route, which occupied ten days, for they travelled slowly. Mr. Cecil, as he gazed with delight on his child, whose al-

tered appearance, gay spirits, and animated manner, were a sufficient proof that her health was already perfectly re-established, enjoyed a great share of happiness, and looked forward to her marriage with Horace Grantham with entire satisfaction.

In a pecuniary point of view, it was a great match for her ; and, although Mr. Cecil did not undervalue the many advantages which the possession of wealth grants, he set a far greater price on the good fortune which had given Amy a husband in every way worthy of her, and who, he felt convinced, would spend and dispose of the magnificent fortune which he had inherited, in a becoming and useful manner.

On their arrival at Calais, the weather became very tempestuous, so much so, that the steamer did not go as usual. Much against their inclination, therefore, they were forced to remain till the storm moderated.

“Never mind,” said Mr. Cecil to Amy.
“The delay is unavoidable, and we shall be rewarded, I am confident, by finding John and Horace at Dover, awaiting our arrival.”

CHAPTER XI.

Horace and his friend were seated one morning in the drawing-room of their hired apartments, when they were startled by the well-known postman's knock.

"Letters from Austria, for a sovereign!" cried John Cecil.

Horace put down his book, but did not reply. His valet entered the room, and placed a letter in his hand. It was from Mr. Cecil. He opened it quickly, and discovered an enclosure directed to himself in the handwriting of Amy. There was

also a letter addressed to John from his father.

“Who was right, Horace?” continued John, leaving the room, whilst breaking the seal of his despatch, for he felt certain, although Horace had not said a word, that the letter was from his sister, and that he would prefer being alone during the perusal.

Reader—was Horace Grantham in truth *alone*, or was his spirit, as he perused the letter from his betrothed, conveyed through the realms of space by that miraculous, yet unmistakeable agency, which unites human beings under the influence of the all-powerful passion of love, to the distant object of their affections? Can a person in such a position be said, indeed, *ever* to be alone? Are not the ideas, the thoughts, the waking aspirations, nay, the very hours of sleep itself, disturbed by dreamy shadows, indefinite, yet intimately connected with the loved spirit far away, yet present, which thus

asserts its magnetic mystic power? Horace felt all this as he perused the following:—

“ *Upper Austria,*

“ *E—, Nov. 30.*

“ DEAREST HORACE,

“ For I can now call you so, heaven be praised, without fear and trembling. Yes, dearest Horace, long beloved, our separation has caused me sufferings, which now, by the mercy of God, are wholly removed. You shall be repaid for the past by a full confession from your happy Amy; your's for ever, in heart and soul, who gives you her hand, and moreover acknowledges that in doing so, she but obeys the dictates of her own nature, and grants herself the greatest boon on earth. Horace, dear Horace, when I said that “there was much misery in store for us,” I knew it only too well, but *how much* I did not know, or I should not have had strength to speak of it.

That the load of grief, the dreadful agonies which I have undergone, were to be thus mercifully removed in so short a period, I did not even dream of, and at first could scarcely comprehend it; for the chain of circumstances which you have acted a part in, and an account of which reached us this morning, (accompanied by your beloved letter, for which a thousand thanks,) are so extraordinary and unexpected, that I can hardly collect myself at present sufficiently to allude to them, for I knew full well the character of the person who had entrapped me, and expected nothing favourable from his consideration or conduct. Judge then, my dear Horace, of my feelings, when, faint with joy, and almost senseless from emotion and anxiety, I read the joyful news of my liberation—my freedom—to foster, without a taint of sin or an atom of distrust, my love for you, my thoughts of you, my hopes of beholding you—*you*, who have long possessed

my heart, and without whom I feel I could not have striven with my destiny, previously so cheerless and miserable, now indescribably happy; for I am full of hope, joy, and gratitude to heaven for the blessings vouchsafed to me.

“Oh, Horace, I am too happy, for I feel it cannot last, yet cannot help indulging the blissful anticipations which crowd thick and fast upon me, when I tell you, that we are soon to meet, sooner than you can hope or expect. Already the preparations are begun for our journey to London, dear Horace; what is London to me? or any spot where I am severed from you? It is to you I come, anxious to endeavour to repay you for the past, for the pain which I necessarily, but with dreadful anguish to myself, inflicted on you, during those fatal days which preceded your departure and our unhappy separation.

“All this is over, dearest Horace: I am

yours. My dear father not only consents, but is overjoyed at the prospect of our union. My eyes are filled with tears, when he sings your praises, and congratulates his dear Amy on her conquest, as he is pleased to call it. Your dear letter is my sole treasure now. I guard it jealously, and cannot sufficiently thank you for not alluding, in our first communication to each other, to the dreary past, but referring me to my father for explanations. All this, dear Horace, has been gone through; I understand it all, but will follow your example, and not write about it.

“Dear Madame Le Clerc shares our happiness, and declares, were she young enough, she would not let us depart without her. Horace, she is a dear, good old lady, and we must never forget her. I have already a request to make to you regarding her; which you will, I know, indulge me in; I leave you to guess what it may be.

“ You will not hear from me again, but soon behold me.

“ Papa says we shall arrive about the 10th of December, but he has written at length to John, and also enclosed a letter to your father, whose acquaintance I am anxious to make. Now, dearest, that Heaven preserve you till we meet, and for ever, is the devoted prayer of,

“ Yours for ever,

“ AMY CECIL.”

How many times Horace read this over, or what he did with the signature repeatedly and oft, need not be mentioned. A new life seemed from that hour to have possessed him. His manner became joyous and animated, his countenance serene, and his time was occupied in making the necessary arrangements, for his approaching marriage, with his lawyers, his tradesmen, and lastly, with his father, who *now* entered with

alacrity into his views, and absolutely went so far one morning, as to ask Horace's opinion on a new hack, which he had just purchased.

The news from Scotland continued most satisfactory; it was ascertained that the Fosters had escaped to America, and the work of restitution being all in train, it became evident that Horace would not only obtain a large sum in ready money, but inherit the business. It was his intention to dispose of the latter, but it is not necessary to enter into details.

His fortune was a princely one, and he was already looking out for a house and manor in the country, having hired a town residence, which he intended for the reception of the Cecils on their arrival.

Mrs. Grantham was now perfectly in her element. Accompanied by Horace, or John Cecil, she was daily to be seen, scudding rapidly from her brougham, into various

shops, superintending the purchasing of the furniture, the articles of vertu, the carriages, nay, the very horses themselves, destined for the establishment of the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Grantham, whose arrival she looked forward to with delight and curiosity.

Mr. Grantham senior bore his honours, or rather those of his son—for Horace had already become well known, and a person of some importance, on the London stage—with great dignity, and asked him one day, with gravity, whether he intended entering Parliament. Horace replied briefly in the affirmative, which stopped Mr. Grantham short, for he expected that he would at least have asked his opinion before giving so decided a reply.

At length, a short note arrived from Calais—the travellers were detained by the weather, but would cross the moment the gale moderated.

John Cecil looked at Horace. They both smiled. "Come along my boy," cried Horace.

"Where?" replied John, pretending not to understand him.

"To Dover, to be sure. Mrs. Grantham—we shall all probably arrive to dinner to-morrow."

"There is a train at twelve o'clock," said John Cecil, "will that do?"

"Exactly," answered Horace, who ordered his cab, and in a short time was piloting his magnificent horse, a new purchase, through the crowded city to the London Bridge station.

"Do you remember our drive on the top of the omnibus, not a month ago?" said John Cecil; "what a strange thing life is! how little one knows what the next moment may bring forth!"

"I do," said Horace, "I was just thinking of it. What a change, my boy! but to day I cannot moralize. How the sun shines!

What a delightful air! how intensely happy I am!"

"And what a devilish lucky fellow you are; you may as well add," continued John, laughing, "almost a millionaire, and about to be married to one of the best and loveliest girls on earth, though I should not say it; one may fairly be allowed to envy you."

"I grant it," exclaimed Horace, "and, though I was once foolish enough to imagine that I was a doomed man, that the future could in no way recompense me for the past, I have lived, you see, to acknowledge my error, an example to those who would, like me, under misfortune, give way to despondency and alarm, instead of cultivating, which all should do, the advantages, however slight, which their position affords them."

"You blame yourself unjustly, I think, Horace," said Cecil.

"No, I feel that I do not deserve my fate," replied he; "but here we are."

“Where to, sir?” said the ready porter, as the boy jumped to the horse’s head.

“Dover,” was the reply.

In ten minutes they were off, and the happy meeting must be recounted in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

“THEY honoured the well-known “Ship Hotel” with their patronage. Inquiries were made, and an answer brought that no boat was expected from Calais that evening, but the usual daily mail steamer would, no doubt, arrive at noon the following day.

“They must arrive by that,” said John Cecil, “but what shall we do here this dismal evening?”

“Have a jollification, to be sure,” answered Horace, “in fact, I invite you to dinner at seven o’clock, Ensign Cecil.”

"Agreed," cried John.

"Waiter," added Horace, "put some champagne in ice, and tell Mr. —— to give us the best dinner he can muster for two, at seven o'clock."

"Yes, sir," smirked the attentive man, with that peculiarly cringing bow which the mention of champagne always produces in an English waiter.

The two friends now lounged towards the library or club.

"What the deuce are you staring at, Horace?" said Cecil, as he felt his friend half stop in his walk, and saw him fix his gaze earnestly on the other side of the street.

"Stop a minute, John," said our hero, "I think I know that man yonder."

"That man," replied Cecil, laughing; "which? I see about thirty or forty, and there is, evidently, not a gentleman among them."

"As I live, it is he!" continued Horace,

not seeming to notice the last words of Cecil, "but so changed indeed, that I scarcely recognise him."

"Who?" exclaimed John, "what new mystery is this?"

"Do you see that miserable, jaded-looking youth, with soiled clothes, of a slang, yet care-worn appearance?" asked Horace.

"Do you mean he gazing listlessly on the water, with his hands in his pockets, shivering from the cold?" replied Cecil.

"The same, I know him well," continued Horace, "and so does your father."

"Well, I cannot say much for the sort of company you have been keeping together, if that is a specimen of it," added Cecil, with a smile, "for a more dissipated, low, wretched-looking fellow has not crossed my eyesight for some time. You are not going to speak to him, Horace, are you?"

Horace did not reply, for the object of their scrutiny was now attentively regard-

ing them; his features relaxed into a smile of recognition, though he evidently hung back, and half turned away, as if waiting for Horace to make the first advances for a parley.

"It is, indeed, Curtis, or Watkins, or whatever his name is," said Horace, as if talking to himself, and in doubt whether he should speak or not to the unfortunate man—"but what a change!—his wickedness has found him out at last, or I am much mistaken."

"What are you talking about?" cried Cecil, whose curiosity was roused.

"I will tell you afterwards," answered Horace, approaching Watkins, which was the name Mr. Cecil had informed him was his real one.

"Watkins, is that you?" said he, "I am sorry to see you looking so ill and altogether in such a bad plight. What is the matter now?"

It would have puzzled a physiognomist to define the inward feelings of the dissipated

man thus addressed, by the expression which these words caused his features to assume.

An habitual distrust of his species, and the long apprenticeship he had served in the school of trickery and crime, stamped an air of acute sharpness on his naturally intelligent face, which now indicated also that misfortune (most likely accompanied at last by remorse, and a knowledge that his own vices had helped to ruin him irretrievably,) had been busily at work, so that he did not seem to be able to make up his mind how to reply to the words of kindness and encouragement thus addressed to him by one whom he had instantly recognised and who, he well knew, judging by men in general, would be probably the last person on earth from whom he could expect commiseration or assistance.

Still there was something in the tone of Horace's voice which seemed to encourage him, for he raised his eyes a moment, and

then looking down, as if ashamed and paralyzed by this unexpected meeting, spoke as follows:—

“Mr. Grantham, I am happy to see you looking so well; but I am at a loss to understand your addressing a wretch like myself. At your hands, at least, I deserve nothing, for I have not forgotten the past, nor can you have done so.”

“I understand your allusions,” replied Horace (who, with the natural nobleness which characterized him, saw before him only a destitute and miserable human being, and as such instantly forgot his previous crimes, anxious only, if possible, to assist, and save him from utter ruin), “but there is no reason why I should not yet be interested in your fate: and I promise now, if you only be candid with me, to do what I can for you, for your appearance denotes that you are in distress, which I am both able and willing to alleviate.”

"God forgive me!" said the wretched youth, cut to the quick with this generosity, this Samaritan-like offer of timely aid, from one whom, under the mask of friendship, he had robbed, and done his best to ruin.

"Mr. Grantham, how can I reply? I am not accustomed to meet with people like you. Good morning, sir, I am not fit for your society," and he moved on, as if about to depart, but suddenly turned round and said hastily, "We may never meet again, Mr. Grantham. I ask your forgiveness for my conduct to you, though I deserve it not."

"It is already granted," replied Horace, in a kind voice. "If you are not above accepting it, take this note. I will trust to your making a proper use of it; here, also, is my address in London. Call on me shortly, when, after I have heard your story, I may be of further service to you. For the present, adieu; I am glad we have met."

With these words, he stretched forth his hand towards Watkins, who, stupefied with amazement, mechanically took the paper from Horace; the latter, seizing John Cecil's arm immediately, who had been a silent spectator of the scene, turned quickly away, leaving the man with whom he had been speaking mute and wonder-struck, gazing alternately after them, and at the note which remained, as if by magic, in his trembling hand.

It was for ten pounds. The possessor, who seemed rooted to the spot, looked at it again and again, finally put it in his pocket, heaved a deep sigh, and with his countenance considerably lightened—for the poor wretch was, as Horace had expected, in the last stages of decay, without a penny, and suffering actually from hunger itself—walked rapidly off, gazing on the ground.

“You seem much interested in that poor

devil," said John Cecil, as they walked towards their hotel.

"I was once very intimate with him," answered Horace, "and he was then a very different looking fellow to what he is now. He is a very bad character; but from what I have seen this day, I am not without hopes of him yet. He is the very man from whose clutches your father rescued me when at Homburg, and you must have heard us mention him.

"What?" cried Cecil, with astonishment; "is that the celebrated Curtis, the roué, the blackleg, whose intimacy with you had nigh proved so fatal?"

"No other," replied Horace, gravely; "poor devil! I pity him; for, depend upon it, John, misfortune, when accompanied, as it must be in his case, by a knowledge that it is brought on through our own vices and misconduct, is a million times more in-

supportable, more crushing, than it is or can be, when it falls on those who apparently deserve a better fate, and who have, in the midst of their misery, the consolations of self-respect, the unspeakable gratification of an approving conscience, and the inward conviction that their reward, though it may tarry long, and not even reach them on this earth, is certain; therefore, I say, pity, although you cannot respect, the guilty, and endeavour, by gentle usage and good example, to revive their impulses, never entirely obliterated, for good. I am resolved at least to try the experiment with the wretched man we have just left. Did he not look like one on the point of committing suicide? I may have saved him, who knows? At any rate, I feel that I have acted rightly, come what may."

"Well, Horace," replied John Cecil, "few would have acted as you have done—parti-

cularly with the knowledge you possess of his previous character."

"Possibly," answered Horace Grantham. "Yet I am convinced that there is no other way to reclaim the wicked; and that, if it fails, no correction, however strong, no advice, however well meant, will have the slightest effect. Acts of Christian charity and kindness, if unaccompanied, as is too often the case, by ostentation and pride, speak for themselves. They induce thought and comparisons between the beauty of virtue and the odiousness of vice, and cultivate any feelings which may remain of gratitude and desire of improvement in the unfortunate. If I see any signs of contrition or indications that Watkins repents him of his ways, and wishes to reclaim his character, I shall endeavour to get him some appointment."

"Depend on it you will see him again,"

said Cecil, "though I think it very unlikely that your laudable efforts to reclaim him will be attended with success."

"Even if they are not," replied Horace, "the attempt is worth making. I think he seemed both ashamed of himself, and much astonished at my forbearance."

"Yes, but what effect will the ten pound note have on him?" continued Cecil, laughing.

"I allow it is an experiment," answered Horace. "It may work for good or the contrary—that depends on himself."

They now reached the "Ship," and at seven o'clock sat down to an excellent dinner, enlivened by mine host's champagne—which, accompanied as it was by the lively sallies of John Cecil's wit, and Horace's powers of narration, which were great, enabled the two friends to spend a most agreeable evening, and retire to bed with

that delightful sensation of pleasing hope, which is the companion and main pleasure of childhood, but seldom smooths the rough and well-worn paths of our maturer years.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next morning, breakfast over, they were soon on the Quay. The sun shone brightly, the sea was calm, the steamer which bore the precious freight, in sight.

Propitious day! Breathes there a mortal who has not, at some one period of life, enjoyed similar sensations to those which now filled the breast of Horace Grantham? Few are there, indeed, on whom good fortune smiles to the extent with which our hero was favoured; yet, in a modified degree, all have felt the inexpressible delight, the buoyant anxiety, which the arrival of a beloved friend,

still more the devoted object of one's ardent love, imparts.

"John, my dear fellow," said Horace, whose countenance already indicated a feverish joy, "what a day this is! To what a pitch of happiness am I exalted!"

"Hurrah!" cried Cecil, "here, take the glass. I fancy I can already discern my father and Amy on the deck."

Anxious moments! delightful suspense! the swift steamer nears them! The deck is now covered with passengers, whilst the crew haul up the luggage from the hold.

"There they are!" exclaimed Cecil, "I see them seated by the wheel. I should know them amongst thousands. Look, Horace, they have found us out. Whose handkerchief is that waving in the air?"

"It is your sister," answered Horace, in a trembling voice, turning pale with the intensity of his emotions.

The vessel now majestically entered the narrow mouth of the harbour—there was no

disappointment—Mr. Cecil was standing near the steersman, his tall form towering above the crowd, whilst on his arm hung his daughter, looking more beautiful than ever, as she kissed her hand repeatedly, her face dyed with blushes, to John Cecil and his friend.

“Stop her!” cries the Captain from aloft. The vessel is soon moored alongside—the odious custom-house officers go first on board, whilst John Cecil, determined not to be baulked thus, swings himself by a rope on to the deck, grasps his father’s hand, and embraces his sister.

Horace, more dignified, but equally anxious, follows in his wake, his gaze fixed intently on the fair girl, who tremblingly awaits him—their eyes meet—ah! what a glance was that! what were the sensations which then shook the very soul of each!—then their hands—who says eyes and hands cannot speak? Away, foul calumny! No

words are uttered, yet all is felt and understood. All is joy and perfect happiness!

"Horace," said Mr. Cecil, as they shook hands warmly, "what a meeting is this—how well you look! We have had a glorious journey, only detained a night at Calais."

Now, for the first time, the soft music of Amy Cecil's voice gladdens the ear of her lover, who, keeping close to her side, as if fearful of losing for a moment the invaluable prize, drinks in her words with eager attention. She smiles divinely, her features beaming with health and happiness, her complexion warmed by the sea-breeze, a perfect illustration of womanly beauty and almost heavenly grace.

"Ask Papa, my dear John," said she, smiling, "if I am not a capital traveller. I have not kept him waiting once, which I know is the usual complaint against ladies."

"I will say, my dear, you have not," replied her father, laughing, "but now, John,

go to the Custom-house and get our luggage through—Horace will show us the way to the Hotel.”

The happy party now ascended the platform, Amy leaning on the arm of Horace Grantham, who had neither eyes nor ears for aught but her. He attended on her and guarded her with anxious care, whilst she repaid him tenfold by her sweet smiles and trustful manner.

“I conclude you patronize the ‘Ship,’” said Mr. Cecil, jokingly, in allusion to Horace’s altered circumstances.

“Yes,” replied Horace, who hardly understood him, so engrossed was he with the lovely being by his side, who now conversed freely, though in a low tone, with him, as they threaded their way through the crowded streets, “we dined there last night. It is not a bad house.”

Mr. Cecil held his peace, whilst a smile of satisfaction crossed his face, as he ob-

served the unfeigned happiness of the youthful pair, almost equally dear to him, who were soon to be united for ever, and whose future career, he inwardly prayed, might be as unclouded with sorrow, as the present seemed to prognosticate it would be ; for as they proceeded, linked arm in arm, a short distance before him, Horace bending down his head to catch the low whispers of her voice, they were indeed a perfect picture, formed as if by nature for each other, and a sight which could not fail to be most gratifying to the fond and amiable father.

“Dearest Amy,” said Horace, “I cannot tell you what I feel this day.”

“Nor I,” answered Amy, looking up at him with a smile of fond affection. “But I owe you something for the past, dearest. I feel we shall now have much happiness.”

“Ah, my own Amy,” continued Horace, encouraged by her perfect confidence in

him, "if you say so I will indeed believe it, for your prophetic words when last we parted, saying 'that there was much misery in store for us,' proved indeed a sad reality to me."

She clung closer to him at this sad remembrance of the past, saying in reply, "I do now believe in happiness, Horace, which formerly I did not, for are we not again united?"

"Never to part, beloved," cried Horace energetically, for the unmistakeable affection, the ardent love, which marked the manner, and caused the tones of Amy Cecil's voice to vibrate through his frame, roused all the susceptibilities of his nature, and rendered him almost wild with delight, at first suppressed, but which now burst forth in impassioned and nervous language.

"Hush, dearest !" said she, "let us enjoy this day in full. To-day let us have no explanations to mar our happiness."

“Agreed, my love,” replied he, as they stopped at the door of the hotel, and turned round to speak to her father, their countenances serenely bright. Mr. Cecil, whose emotion was visible, could not restrain himself; tears of joy stood in his eyes.

“Heaven bless you both my dear children!” said he, and hurried into the house, followed by Amy, who as soon as they were alone, threw herself into his arms and wept aloud, overcome with a sense of her own felicity, and this proof of her dear father’s love, and interest in herself and Horace Grantham.

The latter joined John Cecil, whom he met on his return from the Custom House, singing merrily.

“Horace,” said he, “there is a train to town at three o’clock; we must go by it.”

“By all means,” replied Horace, “do you order luncheon, and go up and tell them of our intention.”

Amy and her father in half an hour entered the sitting-room—traces of emotion were still visible on her countenance. Horace understood the cause, and exerted himself to dispel the clouds, which a momentary burst of feeling had unavoidably produced. John Cecil also, who was truly happy at again joining his relations, showed it, during the meal, by giving way to loud bursts of laughter, frolic, and fun. This took effect, and when, after having paid the bill, they were bowed down the steps of the Ship Hotel, on their way to the station, a more thoroughly happy and joyous-looking party were never seen.

The spirits of all rose higher still as they neared London, where they arrived safely at six o'clock, and having alighted at the house, which Horace had prepared for their reception, immediately went up stairs to

dress for dinner in Hertford Street, where the whole party were invited; John Cecil and Horace proceeding to their lodgings for a similar purpose.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. and Mrs. Grantham were all expectation for their guests, who duly arrived; though a little after seven o'clock, which slightly ruffled the host's temper. This was immediately noticed by Horace, for the spoilt man of the world, peevish, and exacting even in trifles, accustomed to be obeyed, to rule all about him with a rod of iron, was angry at the slightest infringement of his orders, or disarrangement of his modes of life, and often showed it plainly to the discomfort of his friends or guests, and great

pain of his son, who often wondered how it was possible that his father, surrounded as he was by every comfort which wealth gives, could so far both outrage good breeding and expose himself,—but so it is, as nothing is more apparent than that the selfish and luxurious, becoming daily more and more wedded to their own ease and gratification, at last look upon the blessings which they enjoy as their proper right, and unmindful of the Great Giver, resent deeply any fancied slight ; and deplore as a positive misfortune, or piece of injustice, any trivial accident which, even for a moment, annoys them.

Mr. Cecil, as has been before mentioned, was previously slightly known to Horace's father, who, though a bad-tempered, was by no means an ill-bred man. They shook hands, Amy was introduced to Mrs. Grantham, who, all smiles and condescension, welcomed her warmly, and was very favour-

ably impressed at this her first interview with her future daughter-in-law.

Who indeed could behold her lovely countenance, radiant as it now was with happiness, without admiration, and not envy the man, who, now seated by her side, at the paternal board, with all doubts dispelled, all anxieties removed, watched her slightest movement with solicitude and attention ?

“ Whom do you think we met by accident yesterday at Dover ? ” said John Cecil to his father.

“ The Emperor of China, perhaps, ” replied Mr. Cecil, laughing.

“ No, indeed, ” continued his son, “ but a person you know. ”

“ Who was it ? ” asked his father.

“ Shall I tell ? ” said John, looking at Horace.

“ Oh yes ! if you please. In fact, I will do it for you, ” answered Horace. “ It was no less a personage than our ex-friend

and companion, Mr. Curtis or Watkins, of Homburg notoriety."

"Indeed," said Mr. Cecil. I suppose he was in great force, and resolutely bent on renewing his acquaintance with you!"

"By no means," replied Horace. "He was in a wretched plight, a miserable object, evidently reduced to a state of abject poverty. He looked dreadfully ill, also."

"I am sorry to hear it, particularly if you have reason to suppose his misfortunes may have hardened, as they often do, instead of softening his heart," continued Mr. Cecil.

"That I could not judge of," exclaimed Horace. "I could not help giving him some assistance, and have told him to call on me in town, when perhaps we shall be able to decide how far he is worthy of pity and further help."

Amy Cecil looked at Horace with evident approbation, for she knew the story of his

career at Homburg, and could not sufficiently admire her lover's magnanimous conduct, and Christian charity and forbearance.

"What!" said Mr. Grantham, "are you talking of the blackleg, who took you in at *écarte*, and whom you knocked down afterwards, Horace?"

"The same," replied his son.

"Well," continued his father, "I hope you are not going to be so foolish as to renew your acquaintance with him. Depend on it he will fleece you again."

Now this sentiment, though in point of fact, there was what is called great good sense displayed, somehow jarred strangely on the ears of the listeners; their compassion had been aroused, and it sounded somehow as if this wary caution, this wholesome advice, was both misplaced and ungenerous.

"I think I can take care of myself, Sir," replied Horace, after a pause, "and, not-

withstanding the past, I shall not be deterred from further assisting the poor wretch, if there appears the slightest chance of reclaiming him from his evil ways."

"Ha, ha! very good," laughed Mr. Grantham, "reclaim a blackleg!—why, my dear fellow, where have you lived? Do as you please, only take my advice, and lock up all your money when Mr. Curtis, or Watkins, comes to smoke a cigar with you."

"Pray, Mr. Grantham," said his wife, "don't be so very disagreeable. I think Horace is quite right."

The subject now dropped, but it was not forgotten by Amy Cecil, who took an opportunity, during the evening, of applauding Horace for his conduct, thus rewarding him for the annoyance he had undergone from the sarcastic remarks of his worldly parent.

Before dinner was over Mr. Grantham, who piqued himself much on his discrimi-

nation and judgment of character, men, and manners, had settled in his mind that his son was a very lucky fellow—that Miss Cecil was actually worthy, and a fit person, to bear the name of “Grantham”—therefore, when the ladies retired, he rose from his chair, shook Horace, and also Mr. Cecil and his son, by the hand, and proposed a bumper to the health, long life, and happiness, of the youthful pair.

Though there was a good deal of ostentation and bad taste in all this, with little real cordiality, Mr. Cecil understood his man, and warmly responded to the toast, making flattering allusions to both Horace and his father. The latter was much gratified, and went so far as to ask how long it might be before the marriage was to come off.

“I leave that to the young people themselves,” said Mr. Cecil, “but I do not see any cause for a long delay.”

"No, I should think not," interposed John Cecil, "as I am to embark for Canada in six weeks; and I suppose I am to have the honour and felicity of witnessing it."

"By all means, my dear fellow," said Horace; "you have been my knight-errant in all my misfortunes, and helped considerably to get me out of them; it would be unfair indeed not to allow you to witness our happiness."

"Which makes a great portion of my own," said the spirited young man, "so I deserve no reward."

This half agreement between the parents, that the marriage was to take place in London in a short time, was soon made known to Amy Cecil by Horace. She gave him her hand, when he addressed her, in token of compliance—words were useless—all had been already spoken and understood.

Now commenced, in earnest, the important collection of a magnificent *trousseau* for

the bride. Horace desired that no expense should be spared, and though Amy often assured him, with a tender smile, that the valuable presents he sent in for her, and the costly establishment in preparation, were affairs of small importance, it cannot be denied that their worldly prosperity and command of wealth added to their enjoyments, and rendered their position, as far as can be judged, one which seldom falls to the lot of mortals.

At last all is ready; the bridal morn arrived.

They were married at St. George's Hanover Square, with all due pomp and magnificence. Mr. Grantham gave a splendid breakfast, and the happy couple flew down to the Isle of Wight to spend the honeymoon; at least, they went by the express train, which is a very near approach to an aerial flight in these enlightened times. There let us leave them for a while, to in-

quire after the rest of the *dramatis personæ* of our tale, which is drawing rapidly to a close.

The Fosters escaped to America, and were not heard of for some years, when Horace Grantham received a letter from James, who was living on a farm they had hired or purchased in the state of New York, announcing his father's death, and last words on that occasion, which had been a prayer for pardon for his misdeeds, and a wish that his repentance and contrition might be made known.

Horace replied encouragingly to the young man, who afterwards married, became steady, and well to do in the world—for drinking and bad society had been the chief causes of his youthful errors. These removed, and his time occupied as a farmer, his mind, by degrees, became purified and softened, and he eventually enjoyed a long life, respected by those around him, and

himself heartily ashamed at the recollection of the disgraceful scenes of his early life, particularly of that memorable one on the night of the banquet at his father's mansion.

Old Macfarlane, the lawyer, having reinstated Horace Grantham in all his rights, received an enormous fee, as a reward for his labours, and was soon after found dead in his bed after a supper, at which the Glasgow heroes had imbibed an unheard-of quantity of their celebrated toddy.

Mrs. Jones was duly cared for. She became a laundress, and was scarcely idle an instant; but if she ever had a spare moment the good woman would sit down, call her children around her, and teach them to bless the name of Horace Grantham, he who had soothed the last hours of her dying husband, and, with that charity which distinguished him through life, removed her and her family from a state of daily want to one of comfort, cleanliness, and ease.

John Cecil joined his regiment in Canada, where he soon became the favourite of the whole corps, a daring sportsman, a jolly companion, a true friend, but not, what many are, dissipated and careless. On the contrary, he always found time to attend to his duties, in two years time was appointed adjutant, to the gratification of his father, who, although his affairs were considerably improved, and John was his only son, was anxious that he should make the army in reality a profession, and steadily endeavour to distinguish himself.

Mr. Cecil lived in London, and spent almost all his time with his daughter and son-in-law, either in town or country, for Horace had purchased a beautiful seat in Berkshire, where they principally resided.

Mr. and Mrs. Grantham senior lived and died in Hertford street; the total dissimilarity of tastes and habits of life rendering a real intimacy between them and the Cecils

quite impossible; yet they remained always on good terms. An annual dinner, during the London season, was an understood thing each succeeding year, which the younger Granthams responded to by an invitation to the country at Christmas, which was as formally accepted or refused. This was all that could be expected or desired, and really, when one looks around, and notes the terms on which many, very many people live with their nearest relations, there was nothing very strange or unnatural in the position.

Curtis, alias Watkins, strangely enough, was never again heard of, though Horace made many inquiries concerning him. It is to be feared that, overcome by temptation, he went again abroad, and associated himself with his former companions; and Horace often underwent a sharp hit from his father on his being "gulled," as he called it, out of a ten pound note so easily.

CHAPTER XV.

ABOUT two months after their marriage, Horace and Amy were seated together one beautiful summer's evening on the lawn of their country-seat, which commanded an extensive and beautiful view around. They had dined earlier than usual, after which Horace had driven out his wife in a low pony phaeton, which he had presented her with; they had returned from their drive, and were now enjoying the parting shades of daylight in silent contemplation. Neither had spoken for some time; their reveries were on the past.

"Dearest Horace," at last said Amy, "do you not recollect that once I told you I had a request to make to you, an indulgence to ask, on which my heart is set?"

"What would you think, my love, of me," replied Horace, gazing fondly on his beautiful wife, "if I were to guess rightly what you require?"

"Certainly, Horace, that you are a conjuror," she answered with a smile, "for I am sure it is a very odd idea, and one which I dare say you will not be able to comply with."

"You may depend, Amy, on my doing so if I can," he said, "as what can give me such pleasure as an endeavour to make you as happy as you deserve to be?"

"Well, my dear Horace," replied Amy, gaily, "I will allow that the proposition I have to make will, if it is carried out, give me great, very great happiness, and it pleases me the more, for I am certain you will share it with me."

"I hope so," continued Horace. "What is it, darling?"

"I wish you, my dear Horace," said she, "to purchase the cottage at E——, in the Tyrol, where we lived, and where we first met each other. It may be foolish, but I have quite set my heart on it; and one of my chief reasons for wishing it, is the delight with which our kind friend Madame Le Clerc would hear of such an arrangement. I have not mentioned my idea even to my father, what a surprise it would be for him! I know he intends to return. I heard him say the other day he should go every summer to the Tyrol. He loves the spot.

"I also, dearest, hope again to revisit those scenes, beautiful themselves, and rendered ever interesting to me by the occurrences of the past. Do your wishes coincide with mine?"

"Completely so, my own Amy," said Horace, tenderly kissing her, "it shall be done. I will write to-morrow to town, and also to

the Tyrol, concerning it; and next summer, if nothing occurs to prevent us, we will revisit E——, your father, of course, accompanying us."

A thousand thanks, my dear Horace," continued Amy, who was really delighted at his ready kindness.

"I had often thought of it before," resumed he, "and I think it was only my fears of disturbing the happiness of the present, all perfect as it is, by any allusion as yet to the future, which prevented me from mentioning the subject. Have you heard from the old lady since our marriage, love?"

"No, Horace, but I expect to do so daily. She has been quite a mother to me, and I know she cherishes inwardly an ardent wish to see us all soon again. Dear Madame Le Clerc," continued Amy, "how happy she will be!"

"Well, darling, no one deserves happiness

more than she does, so let us do all we can towards it, which in this case really is no merit, for promoting hers is but, fortunately, in every way adding to our own," said Horace.

"Horace," said Amy, after a short pause, "do you remember that extraordinary dream, which you related to me, on a memorable occasion? I have never alluded to it, nor have you, though scarcely a day has passed since, that it has not formed the subject of my thoughts; so powerful was its influence over me."

"Ah!" replied her husband, "is it so? That dream haunted me for many a day; it was strange, and then incomprehensible, but so vividly impressed on my memory, that I had then, and even now have, often, great difficulty in believing that it was only a dream. Have you ever endeavoured, dearest, to unsolve the riddle, to ascertain its connexion with our fate?"

"Yes, often," answered Amy, much interested, "but without success, what are your ideas about it? I am all curiosity to hear them?"

"You shall be gratified, my love," he continued, "for I confess that I have, at least to my own satisfaction, unravelled its mystery, and am in possession of a key, which unlocks its hidden import."

"Do tell me quickly," said Amy, in an anxious voice.

"You need not subscribe to my elucidation, you know, if you can invent a better one, dearest," added Horace, but I construe it thus:

"You recollect the dream opened, and I found myself standing on the sea shore, melancholy, and alone. Surely the picture intended to typify my feelings and position for many years before I met your father and yourself, when I lived, in the great world, unheeded and alone, with no pleasure

in life, and little hope for the future. Then you appeared at my side suddenly: we visited together, firstly, a scene of misery, desolation and want. This, I imagine, pictured bodily the lessons of charity, self-government, and control over oneself, which formed the topic of many of our conversations both before and after our arrival at the Tyrol, and during which, though you were not then actually known to me, the idea of your presence (for, impossible, as such a statement may appear to be, I loved you *almost before* I saw you,) always haunted me, and rendered your father's instruction and sage advice doubly interesting to me. Then came the scene of the cave, with its unearthly splendour, and my intense sensations of delight.

“ That clearly was but a type of the happy hour when the light of love first dawned upon us, of those never-to-be-forgotten days, when our spirits first exchanged communion

with each other, when all our time was spent in each other's society, our feelings excited, our hearts overflowing with anxiety, and immortal hopes of bliss.

"Then came the rapid flight on horseback through the realms of space, and over wild and rugged lands—then the fearful precipice—that foretold but too truly the events which shortly followed—for did it not happen as the dream portrayed?—were we not, dearest, by an adverse and cruel fate, torn from each other at the very moment of our greatest happiness?—for believe me, the dreadful separation, and headlong fall which I felt even in my dream, as something horrible, was nothing to the agony which devoured me when I was forced to sever myself from your side, desolate and forlorn."

"Ah," interrupted Amy, "I now see it all—but, dearest, you forget, there was one more scene!"

"There was, my love; and if I had pos-

sessed the faith in my dream, which it appears it now deserves, that scene should have been a consolation to me for the previous one, for it represented your image, divested of all its mystery and supernatural attributes, tending me in my misfortune, whilst my own person—nay, the very horse itself—was restored to its natural state, which should have induced me to believe that, eventually, our mutual happiness would ensue.”

“And has it not, dearest?” said Amy, fondly resting her head on his shoulder. “I confess I am charmed with your elucidation of the dream, and cannot in any way improve upon it.”

“Yes, my own,” said her husband, gazing at her with tender affection; “you *do* improve upon it, for the present solid happiness which I enjoy, and which you alone are the cause of, is infinitely preferable to the illusive sensations conveyed through the

medium of a dream, however interesting or exciting."

It was now growing late. They rose, and entered the mansion together—that mansion in which they lived for many, many years, surrounded by their children, a happy group, and their chief joy.

The following summer, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Grantham, and Mr. Cecil, revisited the Tyrol. On arrival at E——, they found Madame Le Clerc anxiously awaiting them. The old lady shed tears of joy when she again clasped her much-loved Amy to her heart.

"The cottage is all ready for you," said she to Horace, "and I think all your instructions have been carried out."

"Very many thanks, my dear madam," replied he, "for the trouble you have taken; we intend it as a surprise to Mr. Cecil"—

Who just then entered the apartment.

“What do you think, Horace?” he cried. “I have just been up to our cottage, and find it all re-decorated and enlarged, with a magnificent garden attached. I declare I am quite annoyed, as I suppose some German prince or baron has bought or hired it for a fishing-box.”

“Oh, no, not at all!” said Horace Grantham, quietly, who could no longer keep his secret. “Your humble servant has purchased it himself; and, I have no doubt, if you repair to your former sanctum, you will find it arranged entirely to your satisfaction.”

Mr. Cecil looked surprised, but much gratified. Explanations were made; and that very night the party again inhabited their old residence, where the reader is called on to bid them a final adieu, with the parting intelligence, that their future lives were happy and serene. Horace Grantham entered Parliament, and became in every way

a useful and intelligent member of society. His energies, however, were, owing to his domestic tastes, confined principally to the small circle of the county in which his mansion and property were situated.

He was ever an indulgent parent, a kind companion to his children; for the lessons of his youth were not obliterated from his recollection, and he never forgot what he had himself suffered during the period of life in which he had known and felt himself to be a NEGLECTED SON.

THE END.





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Horace Grenthem or The neglected son.



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